POSTHUMOUS WORKS

OF

FREDERIC II.

KING OF PRUSSIA.

VOL. XII.

CORRESPONDENCE.

LETTERS

BETWEEN

FREDERIC II.

AND

MESS. D'ALEMBERT, DE CONDORCET, GRIMM AND D'ARGET.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY

THOMAS HOLCROFT.

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LETTERS

BETWEEN

FREDERIC II.

AND

M. D'ALEMBERT.

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FREDERIC II.

AND

M. D'ALEMBERT.

LETTER CXXXIII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, Auguſt 13, 1775.

M. DE VOLTAIRE, penetrated with gratitude for your majeſty's bounty toward M. d'Etallonde Morival, informs me, by letter, of the favour you have granted this young man, who is ſo cruelly and abſurdly perſecuted by the fanatics of Gaul. The protection you grant to M. d'Etallonde is worthy of the genius and ſoul of your majeſty, and will be an eternal diſ-

grace to the barbarians who have not bluſhed to condemn him to loſe his head, for not having ſaluted a proceſſion of capuchins. M. de Voltaire, and all who have ſeen this young man at Ferney, affirm he is highly worthy of your majeſty's favour, from the dignity of his ſentiments, the gentleneſs of his character and manners, and his aſſiduity in the ſearch of knowledge. I hope M. d'Etallonde, by the uſe he will make of this knowledge, and of his talents, in your majeſty's ſervice, will repay the kindneſs and protection with which he has been honoured. Permit me to requeſt a continuation of this kindneſs, in behalf of a young man who was the innocent victim of the moſt atrocious and the moſt frantic ſuperſtition. Cæſar muſt redreſs the follies of the Druids, and of their agents. It is for him at once to afford examples to his age of war, peace, philoſophy, humanity and juſtice. Let my feeble voice, therefore, pay the very humble thanks of all good and enlightened men, for what you have done in favour of this youth; and for the opprobrium with which you have thus covered ſuperſtition, and fanaticiſm.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, the warmeſt admiration, and ſincereſt gratitude, &c.

LET-

LETTER CXXXIV.

From the King.

September 9, 1775.

IT ſeems that philoſophy as well as religion is to have its martyrs. Divus Etallondus will ſoon arrive here, patroniſed by you and Voltaire; and I will endeavour to fix his fortune in this world, till the period at which, that is after his death, he ſhall perform miracles. It is ſaid you Frenchmen begin to pronounce the word toleration without horror; but you begin a little too late. In the age of Louis XIV. the word was not admitted into the theological vocabulary of his confeſſor. Maleſherbes and Turgot are to do wonders; they are to be the apoſtles of Truth, who will eaſily overthrow Error, but who will have great obſtacles to overcome, riſing from the prejudices of education. You know, when we are very good Chriſtians, we are ſeldom at the ſame time very good logicians; which problem I leave to your algebraic equations, for which no doubt they will afford a ſolution.

Two of your young countrymen have been in Sileſia; M. de Laval Montmorency, and M.

de Clermont Gallerande. I have commiſſioned them both to pay you a thouſand compliments on my part. They are amiable men. Clermont has wit, and I believe ſome knowledge; but of this my diſcretion would not ſuffer me to enquire too minutely.

But, my dear D'Alembert, though you could not viſit us this year, can you not come the next? Do not you know that I am old, and that, if I do not meet you again in this world, I have to no purpoſe appointed a rendezvous in the valley of Jehoſaphat? Believe me, there is no time to loſe; let us execute our intentions while we have the power, or they will never be executed. I cannot come into France, but you may, with permiſſion, come hither, without giving your academies cauſe of complaint. How many perpetual ſecretaries have occaſionally abſented themſelves! Beſide, I imagine the air of this country would be very good for your health, and my wiſhes are to ſee you, before I die, and to aſſure you of my eſteem.

On which I pray, &c.

LET-

LETTER CXXXV.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, September 15, 1775,

SOME time ſince I had the honour to write a letter to your majeſty, in favour of M. d'Etallonde Morival; and, in the name of juſtice and humanity, to return you thanks for your kindneſs to this young man, of which, by his politeneſs, application, and zeal for your ſervice, he is truly worthy. All who have ſeen him are unanimous in his praiſe, and regard the protection which you have been pleaſed on this occaſion to grant innocence and reaſon, perſecuted by abſurd and atrocious fanaticiſm, as one of your majeſty's fineſt actions; and a new anecdote to add to your hiſtory, which already abounds with the great and the glorious.

I am moſt grateful for the bounty with which you have been pleaſed to receive lord Dalrymple, whoſe name is almoſt as difficult to write as to pronounce; but who has not deceived me in the idea he has inſpired your majeſty with of himſelf. To thoſe amiable manners to which the French, right or wrong, lay claim, he adds that maturity of underſtanding to which, unfortunately, they

do not lay claim. I greatly envy him the happineſs he has enjoyed of approaching your majeſty, and am very deſirous once more to enjoy this happineſs myſelf, before I again render up my body to the elements, by which it will ſoon be re-demanded; but I am ſo little certain of my health, and to fall ill on a journey would render me ſo wretched, that I dare not undertake to travel to places much leſs diſtant than Berlin; as for example to Holland, which I ſhould have a great deſire to ſee, were it not for my fears. Yet I am, generally ſpeaking, ſomewhat leſs diſſatisfied with my exiſtence, and whenever I think I can confide in my ſtrength, I will, if poſſible, drag my body to the feet of your majeſty, there to depoſit my laſt and moſt ardent expreſſions of thoſe ſentiments which are ſo juſtly and ſo devotedly yours.

Our young monarch continues to love worthy men, and grant them his confidence; and to do good both by himſelf and by his miniſters. There is ſcarcely a day on which ſome vexation is not aboliſhed; yet the mountain was ſo enormous that it does not appear to be leſſened. It muſt be the work of time; we therefore offer up our prayers for the preſervation of the king. It is ſaid, however, that the prieſts have ſworn to impede the progreſs of good with their whole force;

force ; to effect which benign work they propose to join the parliaments. Thanks to the virtuous magistrates who are in the council, these iniquitous projects will not be accomplished.

Your majesty has rightly judged Le Kain, at least if I may depend on my little knowledge and mathematical severity. There are moments in which he is the actor of nature, but at other times his tediousness renders his performance wearisome and monotonous. I wish your majesty had seen mademoiselle Clarion play. She had no such defect, and I am almost certain she would have pleased you.

Some days since I sent your majesty, by the Strasburg coach, a copy of the catalogue of the late M. Mariette, a very well-informed and curious amateur, who had a fine collection of prints and drawings. The sale will begin in two months, and perhaps your majesty would wish to be a purchaser, which has induced his heirs to desire I would send you this ample and curious catalogue.

M. Tassart must at present be initiated in your majesty's service, and I flatter myself you will be satisfied with his work, and his behaviour.

In addition to my letter, I have only to renew my wishes for your majesty's preservation, happiness, and glory ; and that you may suffer your

people, and conſequently Europe, permanently to enjoy the fruits of gentle peace; that you may long remain the protector of the ſciences, arts, philoſophy, and letters, and that you may continue to promote their progreſs by your own intelligent, graceful, and nervous writings! Unable to do more than follow you at a diſtance, I ſtill ſhall keep my eyes fixed on your flight, and ſhall not fail to applaud your ſplendour.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, the livelieſt gratitude, &c.

LETTER CXXXVI.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, October 3, 1775.

IT is but a ſhort time ſince I did myſelf the honour to write to your majeſty, and one of my greateſt fears is leſt I ſhould importune you by my too frequent letters, and rob you of time which is to you ſo precious. But the kind letter I received requires, on my part, new expreſſions of that gratitude and veneration which, for ſo many reaſons, I am indebted to you. Your majeſty, by honouring the unfortunate and intereſting d'Etallonde, with your favours, will moſt publicly

publicly and worthily avenge innocence, oppreſſed by fanaticiſm, prieſts, and the atrocity of parliaments. They are each as contemptible as the other, as is proved by theſe ſame men, who oppoſed each other with ſuch fury, concerning abſurdities, under the late king, and have now entered into an offenſive and defenſive league, which they have the inſolence publicly to announce, in oppoſition to the royal authority (but which doubtleſs will not ſuffer ſuch proceedings) and, if poſſible, to impede that good which enlightened and virtuous miniſters endeavour to effect. I told a perſon the other day, and I fear I propheſied, that, by expelling the new parliament and recalling the old, we exchanged a ſtinking for a venomous animal.

The prieſts, who are now holding an aſſembly, as they unfortunately do every five years, and who, in this aſſembly, wrangle and abuſe each other, are to go in a body to conjure the king to renew the atrocious and abſurd edicts which command the perſecution of the proteſtants. This is a part of the oath they made the monarch take at his coronation. I know not whether your majeſty has received the printed work, the title of which is—*Formules et Cérémonies pour le Sacre de S. M. Louis XVI.** I wiſh your

* Forms and Ceremonies for the Coronation of Louis XVI.

occu-

occupations, which are indeed too important to ſuffer interruption by the peruſal of ſuch folly, would permit you to caſt your eye over this book, which has excited the indignation of all the good and faithful ſubjects of our young and virtuous monarch. You will there ſee, page 60, that the prieſts recommend the new king to the guidance of Heaven, whom, ſay they, *we have elected* ſovereign of this land. How can prieſts be permitted, in this ridiculous and offenſive ceremony, never to mention any thing but themſelves, *their* privileges, *their* poſſeſſions, and *their* claims, and never to ſpeak of the rights of king or people! The only conſolation of enlightened and faithful patriots is a hope that, during the reign of Louis XVI. to which they wiſh happineſs and continuance, knowledge will make a ſufficient progreſs finally to occaſion this abſurd and ſtrange ceremony to be wholly laid aſide: a ceremony which, though made a pretext by prieſts, is by no means the object of religion. The marquis Tanucci, a moſt enlightened man, who apparently is well acquainted with whatever is odious and inſolent in the ſacerdotal formula for the conſecration, has prevented the preſent king of Naples, whoſe prime miniſter he is, from ſubmitting to this kind of humiliation. May we hereafter do the ſame!

My

My indignation againſt the prieſts has carried me ſo far that I have ſcarcely left myſelf room to ſpeak of affairs of greater conſequence. It is ſaid that M. Margraff, a very able chemiſt of your academy, is near his end. Should your majeſty not have any perſon whom you intend as his ſucceſſor, and ſhould you pleaſe to put the ſame confidence in me on this as on former occaſions, I perhaps ſhall find a proper perſon; and may have the good fortune to ſucceed, in this choice as I have done in others, to your majeſty's ſatisfaction.

I have alſo been informed of the death of M. Heinius, the director of the philoſophic claſs, and imagine that M. Beguelin would moſt worthily fill his place, from his amenity, labours, and knowledge; for which reaſon I take the liberty to recommend him to your majeſty's bounty.

Why am I denied the pleaſure of perſonally repeating what I am obliged to ſay by letter? Your majeſty has had the kindneſs to ſend me new invitations, which excite my gratitude and affection. Why cannot I anſwer them as I wiſh? My place of ſecretary would not prevent me from paſſing ſome time with your majeſty, and once again laying all thoſe ſentiments which have ſo long been familiar to my heart at your

majeſty

majeſty's feet. But a feeble ſtate of health, the fear of not being able to endure fatigue, and friends that are dear to me, who are ill, and who have need of my aſſiſtance, will not permit me to form any fixed project of the kind. Yet I do not wholly deſpair of accompliſhing my wiſhes, and of renewing to your majeſty thoſe teſtimonies of veneration with which I ſhall all my life remain, &c.

LETTER CXXXVII.

From the King.

October 23, 1775.

POSIDONIUS may ſay what he pleaſes, but the gout is a real phyſical evil. It has kept all my members in bondage during four weeks, and prevented me from anſwering your letter, which gave me pleaſure, becauſe it gave me to hope I again ſhould ſee and hear the ſage Anaxagoras, before I drink of the waters of Lethe. Take my advice, let us improve the preſent opportunity, and ſee each other while we are able. As ſoon as I know the route you have choſen, I ſhall act contrary to the practice of prieſts, who ſtrew the road to Paradiſe with thorns

thorns and ſtumbling-blocks, and ſhall ſtrew yours with roſes and garlands. I own that Paradiſe is not here, and that this is a ſandy country; yet do we hold true philoſophers in greater eſtimation than Jews do the cherubim and ſeraphim.

I congratulate you on the philoſophic miniſtry which the ſixteenth Louis has choſen. May he long remain fixed in his choice, in a country where novelty is inceſſantly called for, and where the ſcene is ever ſhifting. Beware leſt their reign ſhould be of ſhort duration.

Divus Etallondus is arrived, and we ſhall prepare a niche for him, as the martyr of philoſophy and good ſenſe, in which being placed, we hope he will inceſſantly work miracles. For example, that he will drive his perſecutors completely mad; that he will ſend fanatics to Bedlam; that he will raiſe La Barre and Calas from the dead; and that finally he will worthily decorate (with aſſes ears) the heads of all your paltry doctors of the Sorbonne. Should you perceive any ſuch miracles actually effected at Paris, do not fail to inform me, that they may be inſerted in the legend of the ſaint.

I imagine that the place which you have mentioned in our academy, was diſpoſed of before the arrival of your letter; this however will not prevent

prevent my paying it due deference on the firſt opportunity. But come yourſelf, as you have given me to hope; impart life to that academy of which, though abſent, you are the ſoul, and here receive the ſincere approbation and marks of friendſhip of an Obotrite* nation, where more juſtice is done you than in your own country.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CXXXVIII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, December 15, 1775; the anniverſary of the Battle of Keſſelſdorf.

I AM entirely of your majeſty's opinion, and not of that of the empyric Poſidonius; I think the gout is a great evil, not only to thoſe who ſuffer it but even to thoſe who intereſt themſelves for the ſuffering. The violent attack you have ſuſtained has excited in me very ſerious alarms, even after the laſt letter I had the honour to receive from you. The worſt reports have been current here, and it was only by dint of enquiry that I could in ſome degree allay my

* The Obotrites were an ancient German people. T.

fears.

fears.—Nor ſhall I be entirely delivered from them, till your majeſty ſhall pleaſe to ſend me intelligence of the preſent ſtate of your health, ſo dear to my heart.

I have received a letter from Divus Etallondus, as your majeſty is pleaſed to call him, who appears to be deeply penetrated with gratitude for your bounty; he is determined to neglect nothing that may render him worthy of this bounty. I hope his induſtry, his conduct, and his manners, will prove to your majeſty, or rather to the abſurd and atrocious fanatics, from whom you have wreſted the unfortunate victim, that it is poſſible for a man, who at the age of eighteen neglected to pay the honours of ſalutation to a proceſſion of capuchins, in rainy weather, to merit the favours and eſteem of a great king.

From the hope which your majeſty has been pleaſed to inſpire, to remember the requeſt I preſented in favour of M. Beguelin, on ſome other occaſion, I again take the liberty to recommend this eſtimable man to your kindneſs, of which I believe him worthy, by the propriety of his behaviour and his aſſiduity.

I alſo did myſelf the honour to offer my ſervices in queſt of a ſucceſſor to M. Margraff, ſhould the academy loſe that able chemiſt. As

 I make

I make no exception to perſons, when your majeſty's ſervice and the good of your academy are in queſtion, I have lately learnt that there is a very able chemiſt at Stockholm, named M. Scheele, a member of the Academy of Sciences of that city, and who, without being otherwiſe known to me, appears to be held in great eſteem by the moſt able chemiſts in France. Your majeſty may make enquiries on the ſubject, and perhaps without difficulty obtain this learned man.

I am alſo informed that M. Michaelis, of Göttingen, of whom I know nothing except that he is a man very diſtinguiſhed for his learning, and that twelve years ago your majeſty was deſirous of inviting him to Berlin, would at preſent be much diſpoſed to this removal, from ſome diſguſt he has received, which diminiſhes his attachment to Hanover. My zeal alone dictates this information, of which your majeſty will make ſuch uſe as you ſhall think proper, agreeable to your own wiſdom and knowledge.

I ſome days ſince received a letter from the marchioneſs d'Argens, who appears exceedingly afflicted at the diſſatisfaction which your majeſty has indicated, becauſe the mauſoleum to the memory of her huſband is erected at Aix, and not at Toulon. She informs me that the biſhop of Toulon would not ſuffer it to be erected

erected in his dioceſe, although the manner of the death of the marquis, in which he conformed to all the ſacraments of the Romiſh church, might have calmed the ſcruples of the moſt timid. I imagine the widow could not have oppoſed this arbitrary reſiſtance, without encountering the whole horde of penitents, blue, black, white, red, &c. with whom this country is over-run, and without, in ſome manner, committing your majeſty in ſquabbles with Provençal prieſts, who are no better than other prieſts, and who, thanks to their climate, are ſtill nearer a ſtate of lunacy and folly.

Our biſhops have requeſted the king to declare the children of proteſtants baſtards, and ſuffer monaſtic vows to be taken at ſixteen. Theſe requeſts are well worthy of French biſhops! The king has replied with prudence, and it is the hope of the nation he will in theſe points conform to the wiſhes which all good citizens long have made, that Frenchmen may, without diſtinction, enjoy the protection of the laws, and that no man be allowed to diſpoſe of his freedom at an age when he is legally incapable of diſpoſing of his eſtate.

Great military reforms are announced, eſpecially in the houſehold troops, that have hitherto been of vaſt expence to the nation, and of no

utility. Intereſted people, who are numerous, begin already loudly to exclaim; but the nation bleſſes the prince and his miniſter.

Accept, ſire, with your uſual kindneſs, my good wiſhes for your majeſty on the approaching year. May many more be added, and may you long receive that homage of reſpect, gratitude, and admiration, with which, &c.

LETTER CXXXIX.

From the King.

December 30, 1775.

I OWN I am not ſo great a ſtoic as Poſidonius, and I know not whether, had Zeno of Elea like me ſuſtained fourteen ſucceſſive fits of the gout, he would not have confeſſed that the gout is a real evil. Whether the body be only the caſe of the ſoul, or an organized intelligent machine, it is equally certain that matter prodigiouſly influences mind, and that pain finally ſubdues and renders the mind melancholy. Nature has given us ſenſations; nor can the double refined reaſoning of the Portico deprive us of theſe ſenſations, unleſs they could change our nature. My pain has been very great, and though

though the diſeaſe was not dangerous, its duration made it ſuppoſed I ſhould begin my march on that road which ends in the gulph of forgetfulneſs. But my hour was not come, and I ſtill reſpire, to honour letters, and to applaud thoſe who, like a certain Anaxagoras, diſtinguiſh themſelves with eclat. Should that ſage come hither, his preſence will relieve me from all remaining infirmities, and we will converſe together on the king of France, his good qualities, the government of philoſophers, and the fine hopes which have thence been conceived by the nation of the Gauls.

We are told Voltaire is become a marquis, and at the ſame time an Intendant of the country of Gex; but I ſhould be better pleaſed had he no ſuch titles, and at the ſame time had he no reaſon to fear a return of apoplexy. Should Europe loſe this great genius, literature would be at an end. Men of mediocrity will ſucceed, and, for want of better, be applauded, and good taſte will be entirely loſt. This may be foreſeen without the gift of prophecy. I who love letters think of their decay with grief. Ages muſt paſs away before nature ſhall produce another Voltaire. And who knows in what climate ſhe ſhall ſcatter ſuch ſeed? Perhaps in Ruſſia; perhaps on the banks of the Caſpian; but of

this we ſhall not be ſpectators. I muſt ſatisfy myſelf with the great men I have known; the ſpecies has always been rare, in every country and every age. I muſt return thanks to my good fortune, for having been born at the cloſe of the age of Louis XIV.

I will give you full ſatisfaction relative to M. Weguelin. Margraff ſtill lives, nor do I think he has any inclination haſtily to depart and work in the laboratory of the next world. D'Etallonde is a good lad, and it would have been barbarous cruelty to have broiled him, for omitting to make a bow. Ah, my dear D'Alembert, your *** is a ſtrange creature, and has brought many evils on the human race! Your Gallic prieſts are greater bigots than thoſe of the holy Roman empire of Germany. Superſtition viſibly declines in catholic countries; and, ſhould it ſo continue to decline but a little longer, the monks will abandon their cells, the prejudices of the people will no more find food, and reaſon will appear in open day, without fear of perſecution or of faggots. The zeal of enthuſiaſm is loſt. The numerous good books, that have ſtript fables which the public regarded as ſacred of their abſurdity, have alſo couched the cataracts which blinded the eyes of prime miniſters, that bluſh at their ſenſeleſs worſhip, and ſilently labour

bour for the downfal of ſuperſtition. May Heaven bleſs their labours!

In revenge, a biſhop of Toulon reduces the tomb of the marquis d'Argens to a cenotaph, which the living are obliged to erect, to his memory, at the diſtance of ſome leagues from the place in which the body of the poor philoſopher repoſes. Nothing was wanting to complete the act, but to ſee this barbarous monk dig up his remains, and caſt them to the birds of the air. Yet, while ſuch indignities are committed, men have the effrontery to call the eighteenth century our philoſophic age. But, no; while ſovereigns ſhall wear theological chains, and while thoſe who are paid to pray for ſhall govern the people, truth, oppreſſed by theſe tyrants of the mind, will never enlighten nations; ſages will think only in ſilence, and the moſt abſurd ſuperſtitions will lord it over the empire of the Gauls.

I hope we ſhall diſcuſs all theſe ſubjects together, and that I ſhall, *viva voce*, be able to aſſure you of my whole eſteem and friendſhip.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CXL.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, February, 23, 1776.

I KNOW not whether there be any phyſical ſympathy between your majeſty and your moſt unworthy ſervant, to whom by moral ſympathy he is ſo much attached, but the fourteen fits of the gout, which your majeſty has ſuſtained, have been followed, in my perſon, by a long fit of the rheumatiſm, which I have ſucceſſively had in all parts of my feeble body, and which has been totally deſtructive of the little improvement of which I began to be ſenſible, in my frail machine. The weather, indeed, for three weeks has been more exceſſively ſevere than had before been known in the memory of man. The cold in 1709 was leſs by one degree; at leaſt, if we can rely on obſervations which appear to be as accurate as poſſible. Fortunately the ſame calamity did not reſult from the cold of 1776, becauſe the ground was covered with ſnow; nor have we this year, as in the year 1709, had a partial thaw ſo totally deſtructive. But ſome poor wretches have died with cold and hunger. Our young king, who is bene-

beneficence and juſtice itſelf, has ſaved all of whom he could come to the knowledge, and has ſet no bounds to his benevolence.

We are aſſured the cold has been proportionately ſevere in the north. I much fear that if it has been ſo at Berlin, your majeſty muſt have greatly ſuffered from its effects. Let me entreat you kindly to remove theſe fears; though all that I hear affords me conſolation.

It is not true that Voltaire is become a marquis, and Intendant of the country of Gex, as your majeſty has been informed. He is no more a marquis and Intendant than he was before. But he has profited by the adminiſtration of a virtuous Comptroller-general, zealous for the public good, and has petitioned that the country of Gex, in which he lives, might no longer be devoured by financiers. His petition has been granted. The effects are at once advantageous to both king and people. He is in good health, and, I hope, notwithſtanding he is now eighty-two, letters and humanity will not loſe him yet. How great, as your majeſty well obſerves, will be the loſs! I turn my thoughts from the ſubject, and when I every morning repeat, as for theſe two years I have done, *Domine ſalvum fac regem*, I add a ſhort prayer for another king, whom I will leave you, ſire, to

divine, and an *oremus* for the philoſopher of Ferney.

Since your majeſty is pleaſed to notice the recommendation I took the liberty to ſend, in behalf of M. Beguelin, I obtrude ſo far again as to requeſt your favours for this man of merit, whenever you ſhall find an opportunity.

I alſo requeſt the ſame bounty in behalf of M. d'Etallonde; and that with the more confidence becauſe I know how much your majeſty is ſo diſpoſed, and am ſenſible of the merit of the man. Your majeſty well may ſay it is impoſſible to remember his perſecutors without indignation being excited, againſt thoſe tigers, in long robes and caſſocks, whoſe fooliſh and barbarous fanaticiſm was the cauſe of his ſufferings. Our parliamentary Midaſes recommence their follies, and are remonſtrating againſt edicts the moſt juſt, the very purport of which is the relief of the people. They burn ſilly works, that had been ſix years forgotten; and thus, by their condemnation, reſtore them to life. They perſecute an unfortunate author, becauſe his bookſeller would not give a fooliſh Janſeniſt of the parliament the whole edition of an unknown book, which had diſpleaſed this idiot, although the work was privileged; and they occaſion us to regret blockheads, at leaſt peaceable ones,

whoſe

whoſe ſucceſſors they are; for we even ſhould prefer the toad to the aſpic.

It ſeems, too, that the affairs of England in America proceed but ill. Though a war at two thouſand leagues diſtance intereſts me leſs than the war of 1756, I ſtill fear leſt the drop of oil ſhould ſpread, and extend to us. My courage is in need of confirmation, from your majeſty.

Our literature, ever poor, is particularly ſo at preſent. Nothing appears which even deſerves to be criticiſed, and we fill up the vacancies of the French Academy as well as we can, after the manner of the lord of the goſpel feaſt, and call in the halt, the maimed, and the blind of literature. But, while Frederic and Voltaire live, letters ought to take conſolation.

Accept, ſire, with your uſual goodneſs, the aſſurance of all thoſe ſentiments which my heart has ſo long entertained for your majeſty, and the profound admiration, &c.

LETTER CXLI.

From the King.

March 17, 1776.

SINCE the laſt time I wrote to you, I have had two more fits of the gout. This is rather ſevere. I however believe that, for the preſent, I am divorced, and entirely freed from this vile malady. I am ſorry to hear you are incommoded by the rheumatiſm; but our ſlight machine declines with age, and by inſenſible decay prepares for total deſtruction. My gout, however, ſalutes your rheumatiſm, from which, I hope, you will ſoon be delivered.

The winter has been violent; the barometer, on days of exceſſive cold, ſtood at eighteen degrees, which is two more than the point at which it ſtood in the year 1740. But the cold continued in this ſtate only three days. Neither the corn nor the fruit-trees have ſuffered, and the thaw, which happened on the twentieth of February, has not damaged the mounds of the Rhine, the Elb, the Oder, or the Viſtula, a thing which frequently enough happens, and is the cauſe of conſiderable loſs. But I do not attribute gout to the intemperance of the weather.

ther. When we are young, neither the iſicles of the frigid zone, nor the heats of the torrid, affect a robuſt and vigorous body. I have had the curioſity to aſk how long the iron clocks in ſteeples laſt, and have been well aſſured that, at the utmoſt they do not exceed twenty years. Is it not therefore aſtoniſhing that our ſpecies, the fibres of which are of thread, and the muſcles of clay, ſhould reſiſt the efforts of time with thrice the obſtinacy of theſe clocks, which are compoſed of the hardeſt materials? The difference between us and clocks is, we are ſuſceptible of pain, of which, while they wear away, they have no ſenſation; but, in revenge, we have alſo in our youth been ſuſceptible of pleaſure, and, in deſpite of age, rational perſons are ſtill, in part, thus ſuſceptible.

I am perſuaded the good actions of your young king give you pleaſure, and that you have not written with the feelings of indifference on the ſubject. If the long-robed gentlemen overturn his good deſigns, thoſe by whom they have been recalled are to be thanked. They ought not to be allowed to exceed their functions. They are paid to judge cauſes, and not to hold the ſovereign in pupilage. You will perhaps ſee the court obliged to baniſh them a ſecond time.

You have informed me that Voltaire is neither

marquis

marquis nor Intendant a little too late; I have written to congratulate him. But there is no harm done; he will eaſily perceive my ignorance is unintentional. If lies are told in paſſing from this chamber to the next, how many lies may well be propagated between Potſdam and Paris?

You complain of the difficulty of properly filling up the vacancies of your academy; it is the fault of the age. We have many more people of ſecond rate abilities than were to be found in the laſt century; but they had more men of genius. The mould in which theſe were caſt ſeems to have been broken. When France ſhall loſe the patriarch of Ferney, and one Anaxagoras, ſhe will have loſt all. As to M. Weguelin, whoſe merit I know, I ſhall not neglect, in time and place, to remember your recommendation. Were his ſtyle equal to the ſtrength of his thoughts, he would perhaps be a ſecond Monteſquieu.

I can eaſily remove your fears, which the Engliſh, animated with martial fury, have incited. They have an inflammatory fever, but there is no appearance that the epidemic diſeaſe*

* Inflammatory fevers are not eſteemed epidemic; but the king did not trouble himſelf concerning the trifling accuracy of a ſimile; he was a king. T.

ſhould

ſhould paſs the ocean, and be communicated to the continent: their guineas have transfuſed it into the pockets of ſome *principi di Germania biſognoſi di ſcudi* *. There no doubt it will end, and the American war will be to Europe what the combats of gladiators were to the old Romans.

My prayers are that you ſhould be ſoon freed from your ſciatica. I cannot yet renounce the ſatisfaction of once more meeting you in this world, being well aſſured we ſhall never meet in the next. Againſt this you ought not to plead; having once become acquainted with you, we wiſh more often, and continually, to enjoy your company.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CXLII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, April 26, 1776.

THOUGH the laſt news your majeſty was pleaſed to ſend me, of the ſtate of your health, calmed my inquietudes, the public, and particularly the public in France, have ſtill had

* German princes wanting money.

very

very ſerious alarms; but I was better pleaſed to confide in your majeſty than the public; in which I acted rationally, ſince the public have ended where they ought to have begun, that is to ſay by ſilence. May you long enjoy your health and fame, for the conſolation of your faithful Anaxagoras, who, at this moment, more than ever, has need of ſuch ſupport! He has the ſpectacle continually before his eyes of a female friend, with whom he has lived for twelve years, and who dies daily, in a decline.

This reaſon, without mentioning my health, or ſome affairs which require my preſence, will prevent me from going, as I deſired, and laying thoſe ſentiments with which my heart is penetrated at your majeſty's feet. My poor machine is beſide ſo ſhaken, by the rude attacks of winter, in addition to mental afflictions, that it is incapable of removal. It is therefore with regret that thoſe good wiſhes only can attend your majeſty, which circumſtances will not permit me perſonally to preſent.

I know not whether your majeſty be informed that, in ſome of the German gazettes, and afterward in ſome of the French journals, a letter, which it is pretended, by theſe gentlemen gazetteers, you have done me the honour to write, has been inſerted, in which the French are

abuſed, Voltaire called an old woman, and the academy of Berlin an aſs*. This ſame fooliſh public, who ſo long were determined your majeſty ſhould be ill, could not find better employment than in believing this letter to be really written by your majeſty. I have thought it my duty to diſabuſe the world, by inſerting a reply in the journals, declaring theſe gentlemen gazetteers were liars. It is for your majeſty, ſhould you think them worthy your notice, to anſwer them in a different manner.

Our young ſovereign continues to merit the good opinion your majeſty has conceived of him. He loves goodneſs, juſtice, œconomy, and peace; but knaves, courtiers, and prieſts, do all they can to oppoſe the reforms and regulations which are preſented to him, by thoſe virtuous and enlightened miniſters whom he has had the happineſs and wiſdom to ſelect. My prayers for him are inceſſant, perſuaded as I am that, of all the princes of his houſe without exception, he is the one we ſhould have deſired for a king, had not he been given us by propitious Fate.

I will not ſay as much for the parliaments, which daily more fully diſplay their ill intentions, are daily more ignorant, and more oppoſite to good. It is ſaid they mean to revive,

* *Un bête.*

and

and by their arrets to give force to, the abſurd principles of theologians, on the intereſt of money. Nothing is wanting but this ridiculous act, which I hope they will put in execution, to deprive them of the little remaining credit they have, and to make even knaves and fools aſhamed of being their partiſans.

Some time hence perhaps I ſhall have a favour to aſk of your majeſty. Some men of letters have undertaken to print an edition of Froiſſart, a hiſtorian of the fourteenth century, of which, hitherto, we have had none but bad editions. There is ſaid to be an excellent manuſcript copy of the work, at Breſlau; perhaps this will be neceſſary to them, and in ſuch a caſe they will take the liberty to entreat your majeſty will give orders that they may inſpect the work. They flatter themſelves they ſhall not be refuſed by the moſt enlightened friend and protector of letters that ever ſat on a throne.

I perceive, by the anſwer your majeſty has been pleaſed to make relative to M. Beguelin, that you imagined I ſpoke in favour of M. Weguelin, with whoſe merit I am acquainted, but who is not the object of the requeſts which I have taken the liberty to make to your majeſty. The perſon I had the honour to recommend to your bounty is M. Beguelin, a mathematician,

matician, philoſopher, and member of your academy; a man diſtinguiſhed in both thoſe ſtudies by his knowledge and writings, and worthy of your majeſty's protection, by his ſentiments and prudent conduct.

Your majeſty adds greatly to my tranquillity, by your aſſurance that the contentions of America will not extend to Europe, and particularly to France. My ſong is continually that of the Evangeliſt, "On earth peace!" I do not ſo much as add—Good will toward men, for I fear peace would then only be for a few.

I am with the moſt profound reſpect, the moſt tender gratitude, &c.

LETTER CXLIII.

From the King.

May 16, 1776.

I KNOW not what the reports of Paris, concerning my illneſs, may be, but I am vain of reſembling the Engliſh, whoſe loſſes are exaggerated, although they are not very conſiderable. My health is that of an old man, who has ſuſtained eighteen fits of the gout, and who cannot

recover his ſtrength as faſt as a youth who is only eighteen years of age. But they will kill me in allegory, like as they make me write in the ſtyle of the packhorſes of literature, and attribute ideas to me which never entered my mind. I am obliged to you for having given the lie to the compiler of the nonſenſe which has been paſſed upon the world for mine. I might demand government ſhould proſecute the author of the impoſition; but I do not love to take revenge; nor are theſe the kind of heroes I chooſe to combat. I read the reflections of the emperor Marcus Antoninus, which teach me that I came into the world to pardon offenders, and not to abuſe my power to their deſtruction.

I compaſſionate, my dear Anaxagoras, that grief which friendſhip incites in you, and which is of the moſt pungent kind; I know not which of the ancients has very well ſaid that friends have but one ſoul in two bodies. I wiſh mademoiſelle d'Eſpinas may recover, for the conſolation of your old age. But, ſhould this happen, and ſhould you yourſelf hereafter be better in health, muſt I for ever renounce the pleaſure of ſeeing you; or have I any reaſon to hope? This is a queſtion which I beg you to reſolve.

Being ignorant whether the manuſcript of Froiſſart exiſt in the libraries of Breſlau, I have written

written for information to the abbé Baſtiani, on whoſe anſwer I may depend. If it be there, thoſe who wiſh to write on this ſubject may receive every aid they can deſire.

I am on the point of making my tour into the provinces, which will find me employment till about the fifteenth of June, when I may again have the pleaſure to write to you. It is very certain we are the moſt pacific people in the world. The ſcene which is acting in America, and which perhaps is preparing for other parts, is to us like the combats of gladiators which the Romans (ſomewhat barbarous in the practice) ſat tranquil ſpectators of, in their Circus, and which thoſe monarchs of mankind made their amuſement. The ſame actors cannot always appear on the ſtage; we have exhibited long enough, others muſt now take their turn. Your philoſophy may therefore reflect, at its eaſe, on the cauſe and effects of that deſtructive war which now ravages America.

Continue in good health, this is the thing moſt neceſſary; and abandon men to their follies and paſſions, the conſequences of which neither you nor I ſhall ever alleviate.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CXLIV.

From the King.

July 9, 1776.

I AM ſorry for the misfortune you have ſuſtained, in the loſs of a perſon to whom you were attached. The wounds of the heart are the deepeſt, and, in deſpite of the fine maxims of philoſophers, time only can afford them a cure. Man is rather a feeling than a rational animal. I have, to my misfortune, too often experienced the ſufferings excited by ſuch loſſes. The beſt remedy is to do violence to ourſelves, that we may drive an idea ſo painful from the mind, in which it takes too deep a root. Some geometrical calculation muſt be choſen, which requires great application, to diſperſe as much as poſſible thoſe gloomy ideas the renovation of which is inceſſant. I would propoſe better remedies, were I acquainted with any ſuch. Cicero, to conſole himſelf for the death of his dear Tullia, applied himſelf to compoſition, and wrote ſeveral treatiſes, ſome of which have deſcended to us. Our reaſon is too feeble to overcome the grief of a mortal wound; ſomething muſt be allowed to nature; and, at your age

and

and mine, we ought the rather to take conſolation becauſe it will not be long before we ſhall rejoin thoſe perſons whom we regret.

I accept, with pleaſure, the hope you give me of coming next year to paſs ſome months with me. If I am able, I will efface from your mind all the diſagreeable and melancholy ideas to which an event ſo fatal muſt give birth. We will reaſon together on our non-entity, on the philoſophy of men, on the vanity of ſtoiciſm, and on our whole being. Here are ſubjects inexhauſtible, on which volumes in folio may be written. Let me, however, entreat you to make every exertion you are able, to prevent your health from being affected by an exceſs of grief: I am too much intereſted to ſupport this with indifference.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CXLV.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, Auguſt 15, 1776.

MY pen, my ſoul, can find no expreſſions to teſtify the tender and profound gratitude with which I have been penetrated, by the letter

your majeſty has deigned to write to me! A letter which is ſo full of truth, of intereſt, of ſentiment, and of reaſon, collectively! Nay, ſire, indulge me in the expreſſion, ſo full of friendſhip! Why ſhould I not, with a great king, employ the word which renders that great king ſo dear to my heart? I ſhould not have delayed a moment to have anſwered this new mark of the bounty with which your majeſty has honoured me, and which to me is ſo affecting, nor to reiterate, with increaſing ardour, thoſe ſentiments on which you have ſo many claims, but that the expreſſion of them would, in my own deſpite, have led me to indulge in affliction, which, no doubt, your majeſty will kindly pardon, in conſideration of my ſtate of mind. Perhaps, too, that gentle and juſt ſatisfaction which your majeſty at preſent enjoys might have ſuffered momentary interruption, by a picture ſo gloomy. The public papers have announced the journey of the grand duke of Ruſſia to Berlin, and the union which this young prince is going to form with you; a prince who it is affirmed is, from his rare qualities, well worthy of ſuch connexions. I have waited the moment of his departure, again to expand and pour out my ſoul to your majeſty; and, particularly, moſt feelingly to thank you for the letter which is ſo

little

little in the ſtyle of royalty, but which therefore is to me only the more precious.

Your majeſty need not ſay that—" You have, " to your own misfortune, experienced the ſuf- " ferings excited by the loſs of thoſe we love." By the affectionate and true manner in which you addreſs yourſelf to an afflicted heart, and afford that advice which is moſt ſuitable to its forlorn ſtate, we perfectly perceive you have felt this cruel misfortune. All my friends ſeek to conſole me, all, like you, tell me I muſt endeavour to divert my attention; but none, like you, have added advice ſo worthy of the friend and the ſage, as that—" our reaſon is too feeble to " overcome the grief of a mortal wound; ſome- " thing muſt be allowed to nature; and, at your " age and mine, we ought the rather to take " conſolation becauſe it will not be long before " we ſhall rejoin thoſe perſons whom we regret." Alas! this is my only conſolation, or rather the hope which enables me to ſupport the few remaining days I have to live. Theſe I do not deſire to ſee prolonged, except once again to throw myſelf at your majeſty's feet; and my health muſt be very bad next ſpring if I do not repair, with the greateſt eagerneſs, to acquit myſelf of a duty ſo precious and ſo ſacred. It is now ſome years ſince I wrote to your majeſty,

at a time when my infirm machine daily declined, that my greateſt wiſh was to have a tombſtone, on which the following words ſhould be engraved—THE GREAT FREDERIC HONOURED HIM WITH HIS BOUNTY AND HIS BENEFITS. This tombſtone, and theſe words, are, at preſent, more than ever, the ſole remaining wiſh of my heart. Life, fame, ſtudy itſelf, are all to me become inſipid. I feel only a ſolitude of ſoul, and that irreparable void which my loſs has left there. My mind, fatigued and exhauſted by forty years of profound meditation, is now deprived of that reſource which has ſo often ſoftened my pain. I am left the prey of melancholy; and nature, to me annihilated, no longer offers any object of attachment, nor even of occupation.

But wherefore, ſire, ſo long detain you with my woes, when you have thoſe of ſo many others to alleviate? Wherefore this detail of grief, when I ought to ſpeak only of the laurels which, ſixteen years ago, on this day, you gathered in the plains of Lignitz? Wherefore mention my ſorrows to you, who are ſurrounded by, and buſied with, intereſts ſo great? May thoſe intereſts, fully accompliſhed, increaſe the fame and glory of your reign! May Nature, which has made you the greateſt of kings, render you the happieſt

happieſt of men! May ſhe add thoſe days to your life which I wiſh her to retrench from mine; and may I drag this body to the knees of your majeſty, ſhed my laſt tears in your boſom, and die grateful in your arms, after having once again enjoyed the happineſs to ſee and hear you, to find you alive to thoſe feelings which uſurp and fill my ſoul, and to aſſure you of the tender veneration with which I have ſo long been inſpired, and which, at this moment, is more than ever juſt and profound!

In ſuch ſentiments I ſhall, during the remainder of life, &c.

LETTER CXLVI.

From the King.

September 7, 1776.

I RECEIVED your letter, my dear D'Alembert, on my return from Sileſia. I perceive your heart ſtill continues affectionate and tender, nor do I blame you. Our ſtrength of mind has its limits, and we ought not to require impoſſibilities. Were a robuſt and ſtrong man aſked to ſet his ſhoulder to the walls and throw down the Louvre, his attempt would be vain;

vain; but, were he aſked to carry a hundred weight, he might eaſily perform his taſk. It is the ſame with reaſon, which may vanquiſh impediments proportionate to its powers, but there are ſome to which it is obliged to cede. Nature intended we ſhould have feeling hearts, and philoſophy cannot work miracles; or, could it deprive us of ſuch ſenſations, the deprivation would be injurious to ſociety. We ſhould have no compaſſion on the misfortunes of others, and men would become hardened and pityleſs. Reaſon is given us to moderate every kind of exceſs, but not to deſtroy in man the qualities eſſential to man. Regret therefore your loſs, my dear D'Alembert. I will even own with you that the loſſes of friendſhip are indeed irreparable; and that, whoever is able to appreciate the true worth of things, muſt judge you deſerving of friendſhip, becauſe you are capable of affection.

But, as it is beyond the power of man, and even of God, to recal the paſt, you ought, on the other hand, to preſerve yourſelf for your remaining friends, that you may not cauſe them that mortal grief which you yourſelf have felt. I have had friends of both ſexes, five or ſix of whom I have loſt, and I thought I ſhould have died with grief. It happened, by chance, that I ſuffered theſe loſſes during my different wars, when

when I was continually engaged in various affairs. Theſe indiſpenſable duties, perhaps, prevented me from ſinking under my affliction. I wiſh ſome very difficult problem ſhould be propoſed for you to reſolve, that ſtudy might prevent you from thinking on any other ſubject. In reality, no remedy except that and time can be found for you. We are like rivers, which preſerve their names, but the waters of which continually change. When ſome of the particles of which we are compoſed are replaced by others, the recollection of the objects that have given us pleaſure or pain becomes feeble; becauſe, in reality, we are no longer the ſame but are in a ſtate of continual mutation. This is a reſource for the wretched, and by which all thinking beings ought to profit.

The hope you have given me, that I ſhall ſee you, excited pleaſure in me for my own ſake: I am now pleaſed with it for yours. You will meet with other objects, and other perſons; and I give you notice I will exert myſelf, to drive from your remembrance whatever may recal ideas of grief, and melancholy, to your mind. I ſhall feel as much ſatisfaction, in conducing to your tranquillity, as I ſhould to gain a battle. Not that I think myſelf a great philoſopher; but becauſe I have, unfortunately, experienced your preſent ſenſations, and for that reaſon think

think I can effect this ſooner than another. Come hither, then, my dear D'Alembert; be certain of being welcomed, and of meeting, not with a perfect remedy for your ſorrows, but with lenitives.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CXLVII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, October 7, 1776.

VIOLENT and continued head-aches have, for three weeks, prevented me from writing and thinking. Theſe have been the gloomy conſequences of indiſpoſition of mind, and were to me the more cruel becauſe they did not immediately permit me to anſwer the admirable letter, which your majeſty was pleaſed again to write on my misfortune. How incomparable, ſire, is this letter, and how few, I will not ſay kings, for it is a language with which they are little acquainted, but friends, can ſpeak ſo affectionately to an oppreſſed and ſuffering ſoul! I daily, and repeatedly, read a letter ſo well calculated to calm my ſorrows. I read it to all my friends, who, like me, are penetrated with gratitude for your majeſty, and, while I read, inceſſantly repeat—

peat—" This great prince is right, yet I con-
" tinue to afflict myſelf!"—Your majeſty will not be ſurpriſed, nor will you deſpair of my cure, though I myſelf can ſee but little hope. The moſt effectual means to accelerate it would be profound ſtudy, which powerful remedy your majeſty, with equal reaſon and goodneſs, propoſes. But of this my poor head is no longer capable. From time, only, therefore, muſt I expect ſome eaſe to my pain, and I fear leſt cruel time ſhould rather devour than cure me.

The compariſon which your majeſty makes between wretched men and rivers, which are called the ſame although their waters continually change, is equally ingenious and philoſophic; and rightly and wittily explains the reaſon why time affords conſolation. But hitherto, ſire, my gloomy river is only ſenſible of the pain of flowing, and has yet no hope of a more pleaſant and ſmooth courſe. Were I five and twenty years younger, I might, perhaps, have the good fortune to form ſome other attachment, which would enable me to ſupport life. But I am now almoſt ſixty, and at this age we do not find new friends, to replace thoſe we have had the misfortune to loſe. This I feel in the moſt afflicting manner, at preſent, by a new loſs, with which I am threatened, or which I rather ſuſtain

before

before it arrives. A reſpectable woman, of great underſtanding and virtue, whoſe name your majeſty has certainly heard, madame Geoffrin, who, for thirty years, has had the moſt tender friendſhip for me, and who, during my recent misfortune, afforded me every conſolation and relief which friendſhip could imagine, has been ſtruck with the palſy, above a month, by which ſhe has been almoſt deprived of feeling and ſpeech, and which leaves me nothing to hope. So far from preſerving, I muſt never ſee her more. Her family, to whom ſhe bears little reſemblance, being religious, or feigning ſo to be, though they are rather fooliſh than devout, and proclaiming, without knowing why, a ſtupid hatred of philoſophers and philoſophy, will not, at this moment, ſuffer me to indulge the deplorable ſatisfaction of remaining with this worthy woman, and of rendering her all thoſe kind offices which my tenderneſs for her might ſuggeſt. Of this, perhaps, the poor patient would not be ſenſible; but my heart, at leaſt, would find eaſe. Thus, in the ſpace of a few months, muſt I loſe the two perſons whom I moſt loved, and by whom I was moſt beloved. Such, ſire, is the preſent wretchedneſs of my ſituation, with a depreſſed and aching heart, and not knowing how to employ my mind or my time.

But

But again, I muſt reproach myſelf for detaining your majeſty with my affliction, when I ought to ſpeak of nothing but my lively gratitude for all your kindneſs, of the profound admiration which your philoſophy, ſo true, ſo uncommon, ſo reaſonable, and ſo affectionate, inſpires; and eſpecially of the deſire I have, once again, to lay all the ſentiments I feel at the feet of your majeſty. My health only can oppoſe this journey, which is too dear to my heart not to beſtow every care in my power on this feeble health of mine, agreeable to the injunctions you are ſo kindly pleaſed to ſend. Alas! Sire, this journey is almoſt the only object which ſtill attaches me to life, the loſs of which I ſhould not now regret, except becauſe it would deprive me of again teſtifying my profound veneration for your majeſty.

May you, ſire, during the coming ſevere ſeaſon, enjoy better health than you did laſt winter! I more than ever fear thoſe violent attacks of the gout by which you were ſome months ſince ſo cruelly tormented. I have other fears; I fear the news of approaching war, which inceſſantly reſounds in my ears, and which may engage your majeſty in new fatigues, which now more than ever would be dangerous. In deſpite of affliction and philoſophy, I ſtill cannot forbear

to intereſt myſelf in the misfortunes of the wretched human race, which need not augmentation. I particularly feel the moſt ardent wiſh for the preſervation, happineſs, and repoſe of your majeſty. You have more than once been pleaſed to quiet my apprehenſions concerning wars with which I ſuppoſed Europe to be menaced, and by ſuch aſſurances have reſtored my tranquillity. May you once again reſtore it at a moment when it is peculiarly neceſſary to me; and that more for your majeſty's ſake than for my own!

I am, &c.

LETTER CXLVIII.

From the King.

October 22, 1776.

YOU here find yourſelf overwhelmed with verſes, which, I imagine, you could have done full as well without. Yet I have ſuppoſed that ſome reflections, rather grave in their nature, might be conſonant to that mild melancholy which you may at preſent cheriſh. The lines aſk, for they merit, nothing better than to be burned before, or after, having been read. For

my own part, I impatiently behold the fine autumn which we enjoy. I aſk when winter will come; and I ſhall then aſk, when ſpring will return, that ſummer may once more procure me the pleaſure of ſeeing you. I exclaim,

Volez, volez, heures trop lente,
Pour mes impatiens déſirs *.

When any one arrives from France, M. de Rouillère for example, I do not aſk what Providence is doing in the third heaven of Verſailles; nor whether your ſubaltern heroes, at three-pence per day, are thrown into dungeons, or have their ſhoulders diſciplined with the flat of the ſword; whether ſhips ride in your harbours; whether ſleeves and coat pockets are higher or lower; or whether your hair be dreſſed in the form of a battle-axe or a purling ſtream †. In fine, I paſs over a hundred things of like importance to aſk —What is the duc de Nivernois about? How is Anaxagoras? Shall we ſoon have the Æneid of de Lille? Theſe are the things by which I am intereſted in France; the reſt to me is nothing.

* Fly, heavy hours; too ſlow for my impatient wiſhes!

† *Si l'on ſe friſe en bec de corbin ou en ruiſſeau.*—Thoſe only who know what whimſical names the French adopt, for their new faſhions, will read of hair being dreſſed *en ruiſſeau*, or, *like a rivulet*, without wonder. T.

A propos; I am informed your men are metamorphoſed into women. Or, to ſpeak more correctly, report ſays that, inſtead of monſieur d'Eon, we muſt write mademoiſelle d'Eon; in fine, that there are aſtoniſhing changes in nature! Here we have an inexhauſtible ſubject of ſcepticiſm! What, ſay I to myſelf, will become of us, if the moſt enlightened nation in Europe cannot diſtinguiſh ſexes? M. de Vergennes will be obliged to ſend to the vatican for the famous ſterſicorium of the holy Peter, that all perſons deſtined for foreign affairs may be examined, and that they may not be admitted till they have firſt received the ſolemn certificate of *pater habet!* I know not how to behave to the marquis, or marchioneſs, de Pons! I ſtand undecided in his preſence, and know not whether to addreſs him with a Miſs or a Mr.! True it is, he has a beard, but ſo it is pretended has D'Eon. Such incertitude perplexes my mind. For what will become of grammatical preciſion, ſhould we no longer know whether to ſay *he* or *ſhe?* Were the abbé d'Olivet ſtill living, I ſhould have recourſe to the plenitude of his knowledge. At preſent, I know not to whom to apply. Theſe things render me ſo ignorant, ſo baſhful, my dear D'Alembert, that I heſitate every word I ſpeak, leſt I ſhould utter nonſenſe! Strengthen my judg-

judgment! Inſpire me with courage and effrontery enough to pronounce Mr. or Madam at a venture; not being able to do better. I had no high opinion of my knowledge; I was, however, clearly ſatisfied of ſome truths; yet is here one, of the moſt trivial kind, of which I am ignorant! I will therefore acknowledge, like I know not what philoſopher, after much ſtudy, I know that I know nothing. Had but this accident of D'Eon happened eighteen hundred years ago, to have believed in her metamorphoſis would have been an article of faith. But, God be thanked, the miracle has come to paſs in our age! Though this be not one of the follies that are inſerted in our creed, who ſhall anſwer for thoſe that are?

Take pity on the moſt ignorant of men! Come, next ſummer, and enlighten his darkneſs; remove his doubts, and let him rejoice in your company! Of this your ancient admirer is in expectation.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CXLIX.

From the King.

October 26, 1776*.

THERE is a proverb, my dear D'Alembert, which is often proved to be but too true; "Misfortune never comes alone;" for which I ſhould be very much embarraſſed to give a tolerable reaſon, though the fact is not the leſs frequently proved by experience. Madame Geoffrin has had a paralytic attack, and, according to all appearances, after having languiſhed till winter, ſhe will be carried off by a fatal apoplectic fit. For you, and for literature, which ſhe honoured, I am ſorry; but, my dear D'Alembert, you certainly know ſhe is not immortal. If we conſider things properly, we cannot but diſcover the dead are not to be pitied, but their ſurviving friends. Man is ſubject to ſo many dreadful misfortunes that we ought rather to rejoice at the moment which terminates his ſufferings, than at the day of his birth. But ſelf-

* This letter, both in the Berlin and Baſil editions, is dated 1777, and arranged accordingly; but, as its contents and the next letter of D'Alembert evidently prove there is an error in the date, I have reſtored it to its proper place. T.

retroſpect

retroſpect is afflicting; the heart is rent that perceives itſelf for ever ſeparated from thoſe who, by their probity and virtues, merited its eſteem and confidence, and its attachment by I know not what ſympathy, which ſometimes ſubſiſts between tempers, and manner of thinking.

I am entirely of your opinion, that ſuch friendſhips ought not to be formed at our age. They ſhould be contracted in youth, ſtrengthened by habit, and cemented by continued integrity. We no longer have time to form connections like theſe; youth is ill calculated to accuſtom itſelf to our manner of thinking. Each age has its education. We ſhould aſſociate with our equals in point of time, and, when they are gone, cheerfully prepare to follow.

I own, ſenſible minds are ſubject to be diſordered by the loſs of friends; but how many undeſcribable pleaſures do they enjoy, which are never known to hearts of iron and impenetrable ſouls! Though I doubt if any ſuch exiſt.

All theſe reflections, my dear D'Alembert, afford no conſolation. Could I raiſe the dead I would; but this excellent ſecret you well know is loſt, and we muſt do as well as we can. When I am afflicted, I read the third book of Lucretius, and find relief. It is but a palliative,

there are however no better remedies for maladies of the mind.

I wrote to you the day before yesterday, and I know not how indulged myself in some jocularity, for which, at reading your letter to-day, I reproach myself. My health is not too good; an abscess has formed in the ear, which has given me much pain. Nature sends us sickness and sorrow, that we may be disgusted with that life which we are obliged to quit. I understand her hints, and resign myself to her will.

You talk to me of war, and precursors which prognosticate the arrival of the god Mars. All that I know is, that the Portugueze are driving the Spaniards beyond all patience; and that, in consequence of a certain family compact, the most christian king will be obliged to aid his allies, and the belligerent powers will probably exhaust their rage by sea. You know that my navy wants ships, admirals, pilots, and sailors, hence it will probably remain inactive; and with respect to a continental war, I do not see how that can take place. The wish of your young king is only to live in good intelligence with all his neighbours, and it is to be presumed his excellent and sage dispositions will not be perverted, though there should be powers possessed of what the Italians call *La rabbia d'ambizione.*

*bizione**. From all which I conclude that, after having been beaten in the ſeas of the two Indies, the authors of the troubles, wearied of, or puniſhed for, their enterpriſes, will make peace; and that Bellona and her attendant, Diſcord, will not diſturb the reſt of the earth.

Recollect, at reading this, that the oracle is not iſſued either from Delphos or the cave of Trophonius; but that they are human calculations on future contingencies, ſubject to error.

In the mean time, I heartily rejoice at the expectation of ſeeing you here; I even hope the journey will be ſalutary to you, becauſe all things are ſalutary which divert affliction. I again repeat my advice; apply yourſelf to ſtudy. My friend Cicero, having loſt his daughter Tullia, whom he adored, ſat down to compoſe. He informs us he was obliged at firſt to lay conſtraint upon himſelf, that he afterward found pleaſure in labour, and that, at length, he conquered himſelf ſo far as to appear at Rome, and not ſuffer his friends to diſcover in him much dejection of mind. Here, my dear D'Alembert, is an example for you; did I know a better, that I would propoſe. We are ſenſible of our own loſſes in proportion to the value at which we eſtimate them. The public, having loſt no-

* The rage of ambition.

thing, does not ſo judge; but condemns with malignity what ought to inſpire the moſt tender compaſſion. Such reflections do not increaſe our love of the public. Commit violence on yourſelf; live, and let me, once again before I die, have the pleaſure to hear and ſee you.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CL.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, November 14, 1776.

I RECEIVED, almoſt at the ſame time, the two letters with which your majeſty has been pleaſed to honour me, dated the twenty-ſecond, and twenty-ſixth, of October. Theſe letters, and that which I had the honour to write to your majeſty, about ſix weeks ago, have been longer on the road than uſual. The worthy clerks of the poſt-offices, receiving orders which, no doubt, are highly reſpectable, but which I ſhould rather any perſon ſhould execute than myſelf, who open letters on their route *through Germany* (for I dare not ſay *through France*) have apparently been more eager than uſual to read for their inſtruction, or rather for their melancholy amuſement, what

what a great king is pleaſed to write to an afflicted philoſopher, and the anſwers of the poor philoſopher to the great king. It cannot be denied, ſire, but that theſe clerks are, in every ſenſe of the word, *men of letters*, and have vaſt curioſity to examine the beautiful. Yet am I fearful leſt theſe literary folks, who are ſo curious, and eſpecially ſo polite, ſhould not be worthy of gaining inſtruction, by reading your letters, nor of catching the ſpleen, by reading mine. Be it as it may, I ſhould think myſelf much obliged to them not to retard, for ſeveral days, or even for a few hours, that conſolation, ſo ſweet and ſo neceſſary to my heart, which your majeſty's bounty is pleaſed to beſtow, under my preſent unhappy circumſtances. I know not how to expreſs the affections of my mind, ſuch as they are incited by this bounty, nor to explain its ſenſibility and gratitude, which are ſo juſtly due to your majeſty, at a time when I thought it ſuſceptible only of grief.

Gratitude is not confined to me alone, it is participated by all my friends, who have the moſt tender veneration for your perſon. I wiſh your majeſty, ſenſible as you are, alive as you are, to true fame, that is to the homage paid by enlightened and virtuous men, could hear their remarks when theſe letters are read, and could learn from their own

own lips how highly the great Frederic, who long has been the ſubject of their praiſe and admiration, appears to them worthy of being beloved! I venture to believe that ſuch a full concert of praiſe, ſo harmonious and ſo true, would affect your majeſty as much as the victorious ſhouts of your ſoldiers, on the plains on which they have ſo often conquered. For my own part, I do more than admire and love; I liſten, I profit by your leſſons, I exert my whole powers to relieve my mind, and I attempt various kinds of labour, ſtudy, and even amuſement. On certain days in the week, I invite my friends, and go in ſearch of them on others. I mingle as much as poſſible in their converſation. I endeavour to perſuade myſelf I take part in it, and that I am at leaſt buſied; and I try to convince others of the ſame, by the apparent intereſt I take in every thing which I hear and ſee. My friends ſometimes think me relieved, and almoſt conſoled; but, when they are no longer with me, when having quitted me I find myſelf alone in the world, for ever deprived of the firſt object of my attachment and preference, my ſoul, appalled, ſinks painfully into itſelf, and can behold nothing but that void which ſurrounds and withers its powers. I am like the blind; their melancholy is deep when alone,

though

though when in company they are thought to be cheerful; becauſe thoſe moments in which they converſe with men are the only ones which to them are ſupportable. In vain would I follow the advice your majeſty has been pleaſed to give me, and which you inform me you followed yourſelf, in affliction. In vain do I read the works of philoſophers, and ſeek conſolation in their company. I feel, as your majeſty well ſays, that palliatives are the only remedies which can be adminiſtered to maladies of the mind; and conclude by mournfully repeating the apophthegm of thoſe philoſophers, "that the greateſt comfort "in affliction is the hope that affliction and life "will both ſhortly have an end."

This is poor pleaſure; but, as your majeſty again has ſaid, it is one of the means which nature employs to detach us from that life which we are obliged to quit, and recals to my mind the ſaying of a ſolitary perſon, to thoſe by whom he was occaſionally viſited, *In me you ſee a man almoſt as happy as if he were dead.* I reſemble the old woman who was extremely deſirous of becoming devout, but could not ſucceed: "I "abſolutely cram myſelf," ſaid ſhe, "with books "of devotion, yet can I ſwallow none of them." I feel, in a much deeper ſenſe than is commonly underſtood by the phraſe, *how great a maſter miſ-*

fortune is, and how many reflections take birth in conſequence of an irreparable loſs, cruel indeed to the recollection, but which, without ſuch misfortune, never would have ariſen. How much exceſs of grief extends and enlarges the ſoul! And, when the mind has only one thought, how vaſt is that thought! I was affected to tears by the paſſage in your laſt letter, which is ſo full of kindneſs and intereſt, in which you ſay—"I "wrote to you the day before yeſterday, and, I "know not how, indulged myſelf in jocularity, "for which, at reading your letter to-day, I "reproach myſelf." Do not reproach yourſelf, ſire; be aſſured you poſſeſs what Tacitus ſays of Germanicus, *Per ſeria per joços eundem animum*; a mind which is equally captivating whether ſerious or gay. You even extend your bounty and call in the aid of poetry, to afford me conſolation, and repeat, in elegant and harmonious verſe, what you have been pleaſed to ſay in eloquent and philoſophic proſe. Your proſe ought to be ſigned Seneca, or Montagne, and your verſe Lucretius, or Marcus Aurelius.

Poor madame Geoffrin continues in the ſame ſituation, ſurrounded by phyſicians, who can afford her no eaſe, and fools and devotees, who weary her, while ſhe is deprived of the ſight of perſons who might beſt afford her ſatisfaction,

and while I am equally deprived of the mournful pleaſure of mingling my tears with hers.

Your majeſty has been pleaſed to remove thoſe fears I entertained for you, and particularly for myſelf, on the ſubject of war. I ardently wiſh you could remove my afflicting alarms, relative to the uncertain ſtate of your health. Be careful of and preſerve yourſelf, ſire, for philoſophy, letters, your people, and, ſuffer me to add, for my conſolation. I wait, with the utmoſt impatience, for the approach of ſpring, that I may perſonally convince myſelf of the ſtate of that health which is ſo dear to me, and accompliſh the wiſhes of my heart, by laying at your majeſty's feet thoſe ſentiments of admiration, veneration, gratitude, and affection, with which I, more than ever, &c.

LETTER CLI.

From the King.

November 29, 1776.

THOSE who have the misfortune to be ſuſpicious uſually extend their curioſity too far. Letters are broken open, the ſecrets of families are penetrated, and the aſylums of their houſes are

are no longer held ſacred. Be they Germans, be they French, who have opened the letters, they have found no food for their curioſity. Some moral reflexions, which regard ourſelves, or trifling jokes, which can only incite a ſmile at the moment, have been the utmoſt of their diſcoveries: we have but to write in the ſame ſtyle and they will preſently be diſguſted.

I wiſh my letters may have afforded you any eaſe, for ſuch was the intention with which they were written. You do well to ſeek amuſement; continue to act thus, and time will effect the reſt. The grand point is to prevent the mind from fixing itſelf on one object. This object, as you have well obſerved, is more vaſt than it is ſuppoſed to be; all that ſurrounds it is gloomy, and very proper to deſtroy the illuſions of the world, to detach us from the inn in which we have taken up our lodging, to make us recollect the ſhortneſs of our ſtay, to lower the pretenſions of ſelf-love, and to convince us of its inſignificance.

Such ideas are ill adapted to feſtivals or carnivals: ſtill it is good to have had them, that we may eſtimate things at their true worth. Pleaſure afterward becomes leſs ardent, and more rational; we ſee time preſſes us, and we ſhould be lunatics not to enjoy a certain good, inſtead of

of courſing a vain ſhadow. Thus muſt we brighten the dark ſhades of meditation, by intermingling more vivid colours, that we may bear the load of life, and not imagine it impoſſible to be borne.

I have lately loſt a general, whoſe name, though not very ſonorous, ought to be remembered by the whole world of women; general Koſchenbar, who loſt his wife, about a year ago, and whoſe tenderneſs, and exceſſive grief for her, were ſuch that they have brought him to the grave. This might furniſh a ſubject for a tragedy, but ought not to be followed as an example. Our whole duty to our friends is a tender remembrance of their virtues, and, if we are able, to ſuccour their deſcendants, and thoſe whom moſt they loved. But I ought not to touch on this ſubject, to awaken feelings which are but too familiar to and forcible in your heart.

Appearances forebode that madame Geoffrin muſt ſink under her diſeaſe. But what exceſs of fanaticiſm is that which exerciſes its rigour over a dying woman; which prevents her from ſeeing her friends, and from expiring in the manner ſhe pleaſes! I cannot recover from my aſtoniſhment! France, indeed, poſſeſſes philoſophers; but I maintain that the bulk of the nation is more ſuperſtitious than any people of Europe.

This

This phrenzy manifeſts itſelf in acts ſuch as the proſecutions of Calas, Sirven, and La Barré; in what has happened at Toulon, relative to D'Argens; and the cries of the public, on the ſubject of Necker *. But there are a hundred examples which prove that the fatal leaven of fanaticiſm ſtill ferments in France, and that this will be the laſt country in Europe in which it will be preſerved. I bleſs the deſtiny of Germany, to ſee that toleration there is daily progreſſive. The pernicious zeal which occaſioned ſo many bloody ſcenes is extinguiſhed, and no man aſks his neighbour what is his religion. For this reaſon Germany deſerves the philoſopher D'Alembert ſhould come and beſtow a glance on her, and I ſhall be the more glad to ſee him appear becauſe it will divert his ſorrows, and give me great ſatisfaction to ſee him once again.

I have had an eryſipelas on the leg, and a large abſceſs has formed under the knee, which I was obliged to have opened; but the wound will be healed in a few days. You have well divined; it is my intention to be uſeful to my country, and to my cotemporaries, during the ſhort time I have to live. It is the duty of man

* Necker was this year placed at the head of the French finances, and clamours were incited againſt him becauſe he was a Proteſtant. T.

to assist others, as much as he is able, which is an abridgment of all morality; and the good heart would be dissatisfied with itself, were this duty to be neglected. I very sincerely wish your affliction may diminish, and your health be confirmed, that I may this summer assure my dear Anaxagoras of my whole esteem.

On which I pray, &c.

P. S. Voltaire has written me a very melancholy letter, and says he is overwhelmed with misfortunes; let me beg you to explain what he means.

LETTER CLII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, December 30, 1776.

DID I not respect the occupations of your majesty almost as much as your person, and did I not know you have better employment than to read my lamentations, or my nonsense, I should take the liberty to write oftener, although, at present, I write but too frequently; so much relief do I find from the answers which your majesty has the kindness to return. I begin more efficaciously to feel the effects of the advice you have been pleased to give.

I again have applied to the mathematics, which I had long ſince abandoned, as it were, and the conſequences are exceedingly ſalutary. Although it is far from delicious, life begins to be tolerable, and I hope that time, ſtudy, and particularly the happineſs of ſoon ſeeing your majeſty, will aid me to ſupport my exiſtence.

Poor madame Geoffrin, for whom your majeſty is generous enough to intereſt yourſelf, becauſe of the tender affection I bear her, and becauſe ſhe is herſelf a worthy woman, remains in an afflicting ſituation, and without any hope of recovery. Happily ſhe does not ſuffer much, either in body or mind; and for this I bleſs fortune; for, did all her mental ſenſibility remain in its full energy, how bitter muſt be her preſent gloomy condition, when increaſed by being deprived of ſeeing thoſe whom moſt ſhe loves!

Well indeed may your majeſty ſay France, with all her philoſophers, of whom, right or wrong, ſhe is ſo proud, is ſtill one of the moſt ſuperſtitious and unimproved nations of Europe; and that the good Germans, whom our *petit maitres* treat with airs of diſdain, are by no means ſo fooliſh as we are. I can diſcover none but the Spaniards to whom we muſt yield the precedency in religious madneſs. What does your majeſty ſay of the things which are now

tranſacting

tranſacting in that wretched kingdom; of the ſolemn ſplendid proceſſion, which has been lately made at Cadiz, by the Inquiſition; of the acclamations of the people who, proſtrating themſelves on their knees, in the ſtreet, during the ceremony, ſhouted *Viva la Fè di Dios**; of the government which ſuffers this; of the publication which the inquiſitors have been audacious enough to make of the bulls of pope Paul IV. and pope Pius V. which declare every man ſhall be ſubject to the inquiſition, without excepting the ſovereign; and of the king of Spain himſelf, who not only ſuffers, but, as it is ſaid, authorizes this inſolence? Report affirms that this execrable tribunal is recovering its whole vigour and activity, and that a Spaniſh lord of great note has already been condemned (by ſpecial favour) to perpetual impriſonment, for having cauſed the lands to be cleared in ſeveral diſtricts of his unhappy country, by heretics, whom he had ſent for from Germany.

Theſe things are ſufficient to augment that melancholy which Voltaire teſtifies in his letters. He has another cauſe of affliction. A work, rather curious in itſelf, has been printed, I know not how or where, entitled—THE BIBLE

* May the faith flouriſh!

AT LENGTH EXPLAINED, AND COMMENTED UPON BY SEVERAL ALMONERS* OF HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF P. You will eaſily divine, ſire, who this king is. People have thought proper, I know not why, to believe, and to affirm, that Voltaire is the clerk to theſe chaplains; and it is added that our lords the parliament, who are as well informed as the Santa Hermandad †, and who do not wiſh the Bible ſhould be explained by heretics, mean ſolemnly to burn this explanation, which however will not be purified by fire; and that they encourage ill-will toward the clerk; not but it is very kind in him to ſtand in awe of their threats. Might not your majeſty do him the ſervice to order your ambaſſador to inform the firſt preſident, and the king's miniſters, that this vile work has really been written by your chaplains, who have been obliged to find themſelves amuſement, to relieve them from the total idleneſs in which they are left by your majeſty? You would, by ſuch a declaration, perform a very good work, for which philoſophy would have ſignal obligations to your majeſty, worthy of thoſe ſhe has ſo long received.

* Or chaplains.

† A Spaniſh court of juſtice, from which there is no appeal, inſtituted to puniſh crimes committed on the highway, and in the country diſtricts. T.

I wiſh much to learn what have been the conſequences of the eryſipelas, and the abſceſs under the knee. I am acquainted with an old man of eighty, who was much tormented by the gout, and who having, like your majeſty, had eruptions on the ſkin which ended in an abſceſs, has felt no more of his gout for theſe two years. How much do I hope your majeſty might find the ſame eaſe; and how happy ſhall I be to be told I am a prophet!

Accept, ſire, the aſſurances of the part I take in the birth of a new prince, who has been added to your auguſt houſe. Let me entreat you to accept, likewiſe, with your uſual goodneſs, my ardent wiſhes for your preſervation and happineſs, during the coming year, which will, no doubt, be a fortunate one to me, ſince it will procure me the ineſtimable pleaſure of again laying at the feet of your majeſty all the ſentiments of the tender and profound veneration with which, during life, &c.

LETTER CLIII.

From the King.

January 25, 1777.

I AM glad to learn from yourſelf that you begin to apply to the mathematics. That intenſe application, which geometry requires, inſenſibly will accuſtom the mind to ſubjects different from thoſe which inſpire grief, and time will do the reſt. I flatter myſelf that your journey into the land of the Obotrites will be advantageous to your health. It will be an additional diverſion, which will weaken the deep impreſſions ſorrow has made upon your mind. For my own part, the pleaſure of ſeeing you will be very great. We will converſe on philoſophy and metaphyſics; but you muſt expect us to baniſh from our diſcourſe all cloudy ideas, which will but occaſion the roſes and flowers that would ſpring up for amuſement to droop and wither.

Letters from Spain, ſome months ſince, announced indications of that alienation of mind into which the king of Spain has fallen. The greateſt mark of folly a man can ſhew is to abandon himſelf to his confeſſor. It is ſuppoſed the prince of the Aſturias only waits the moment

when

when his father ſhall be guilty of ſome falſe ſtep to confine him, and reign in his ſtead. We ſhudder, with indignation, to behold the Inquiſition re-eſtabliſhed in Spain. Alas! my dear Anaxagoras, good ſenſe is more rare than it is ſuppoſed to be. To expiate his amours with the white cow, his catholic majeſty delivers up himſelf, and his faithful ſubjects, into the hands of tonſured executioners, who do more miſchief, in this world, than the fiends themſelves, in that imaginary hell which we have borrowed from the Egyptians.

Your counſellors of parliament would be the very people to protect an inquiſition. Their zeal againſt Voltaire appears to me ſuſpicious. It may very probably be the conſequence of that reſentment which they cheriſh, becauſe he celebrated their expulſion by ſome excellent verſes. They ought to bluſh with ſhame. What honour can they derive from perſecuting a poor old man, who is on the brink of the grave? If we examine the ſubject well, Voltaire has done nothing more than collect the opinions of ſome Engliſhmen, and their criticiſms, on the Bible. He wept himſelf for their audacity, and appears to have written merely with an intention that he ſhould be refuted. So many things have been written, in this age, againſt religion, that his commen-

taries on the Bible are not ſo ſtrong as an infinity of other works, which have ſo ruined the edifice that it is propt up with difficulty; but it is more eaſy to condemn a book to the fire than to confute its doctrines.

Should my chaplains be ſeriouſly mentioned in France, the miniſtry would laugh in my ambaſſador's face; ſo ill eſtabliſhed is my reputation for orthodoxy. Yet I cannot but perceive the deſpondency of Voltaire in his letters with pain. It ſhould ſeem that he is moleſted in his eſtabliſhments at Ferney. He informs me he has loſt a law-ſuit, is a ruined man, and ſhall ſpend his old age in poverty. This is the enigma of the Sphinx, to explain which requires another Oedipus.

What happens to Voltaire has incited a reflection in me, which unfortunately is but too true. We often very inconſiderately wiſh long life to our friends. Had the ſcene cloſed upon Pompey at Tarentum, where he was attacked by a violent inflammatory fever, he would have expired in the height of his fame, and would not have ſeen the fall of his republic. Had Swift died ſoon enough, his ſervants would not have exhibited him for money, when he became an idiot. Had Voltaire left the world laſt year, he would not have met all the vexation of which he ſo bitterly complains.

complains. Let us therefore leave vague chance to act, without troubling ourſelves concerning length of life; let us rather wiſh for happineſs while we do live.

The nephew in whoſe behalf you congratulate me died when he was three days old. I think like I know not what people in Africa, who wept at the birth of children, and banqueted at their death; becauſe the dead only are free from grief, and the innumerable misfortunes to which men are ſubject.

I ſhall add nothing on the new year; it will certainly be a happy year to me, ſince it will again procure me the pleaſure of meeting the ſage Anaxagoras, and of perſonally aſſuring him of my eſteem.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CLIV.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, February 17, 1777.

THE favours which your majeſty continually heaps upon me, and the intereſt which you ſo kindly take in the progreſs of my mental convaleſcence, as continually incite my gratitude.

This

This progreſs is very ſlow. Profound ſtudy no doubt is a relief, and I ſometimes appear to take pleaſure in converſation. But when fatigued by labour, or by ſociety, which ſoon happens, I find myſelf alone; and, totally unconnected as I am in this beſt of poſſible worlds, my ſolitude terrifies me, and turns me to ſtone. I reſemble a man who ſees a long deſert before him, which he is to croſs, and at the end of this deſert a deſtructive abyſs, into which he is to drop; without the hope of finding a ſingle being who ſhall weep his fall, or recollect him when he is ſunken, never more to riſe.

I always perceive too late the folly I commit in recounting my dark ideas to your majeſty, which you kindly wiſh to diſſipate. Rather let me ſpeak of my intended journey, of the pleaſure I ſhall feel when I lay all thoſe ſentiments of reſpect, gratitude, and admiration, with which I have ſo long been penetrated, at your feet, and of the happineſs I ſhall once again enjoy of ſeeing and hearing you. Though my health, at preſent, is not too good, and though the leaſt alteration of regimen, or in my uniform manner of living, is very ſenſibly felt by my poor frail machine, I yet hope this health and this machine will permit me to participate your majeſty's kindneſs, and to come and philoſophiſe with

you on the great evils, and the few good things, of this life.

In my preſent mournful ſituation, I endeavour to find eaſe wherever I can; and I ſometimes think it is at leaſt a pleaſure not to live in Spain, nor in dread of inquiſitors. As your majeſty well obſerves, it is really humiliating, to a ſovereign, thus to ſubmit himſelf, and his faithful ſubjects, to the mercy of a jacobine. How well did the ſacerdotal gentry underſtand their own intentions, when they inſtituted confeſſion! Bleſſed be kings who do not confeſs!

Voltaire has no *white cow*, but he continually fears people who commit cows to the flames. I believe, however, he is at preſent a little more at his eaſe, concerning the Bible explained and commented upon, by your majeſty's almoners, who have nothing better to do than to comment upon the Bible for others, ſince your majeſty does not think proper to let them explain it for yourſelf. But I am informed there is another affair, concerning which he is much afflicted. His eſtabliſhment at Ferney becomes burthenſome to him, becauſe of the little aid he finds for its ſupport, now that M. Turgot is out of office. He informs your majeſty he is ruined, but that is not entirely true; and the good he does to his unfortunate vaſſals would excite my ſorrow

if

if it were. But it is very true that ſeveral great lords, on whom he has annuities, do not think proper to pay him; as, for example, the duke de Bouillon, marſhal de Richelieu, and eſpecially the duke von Wurtemberg. Nor is there ſo much as a farmer-general, it is ſaid, who does not give himſelf airs of making this poor old man a bankrupt, and of treading in the ſteps of Wurtemberg, Bouillon, and Richelieu.

Well indeed may your majeſty recollect the various evils with which the rugged path of life is ſtrewed. Well may you applaud the good ſenſe of the African tribe, who wept at the birth, and not at the death, of man. All that philoſophy can ſay for our conſolation is that theſe ills will end, and that it is *better late than never*. I hope, at leaſt, my ills will not end without being alleviated by once again paying my court to your majeſty, and renewing thoſe teſtimonies of tender veneration with which I ſhall, to the end of life, &c.

LET-

LETTER CLV.

From the King.

March 7, 1777.

THE operation of remedies for the mind, my dear Anaxagoras, is ſlow, and proportionate to the violence of that evil the attacks of which you have felt. Your convaleſcence could not be expected to be more advanced. You muſt continue to employ the tonica of mathematics, to which we will add the exerciſe of travelling, and the ſucceſſive ideas which new and variegated objects will inſpire, and we ſhall by degrees recover the calm of your mind; not indeed ſo far as to efface the loved remembrance of thoſe who were ſo dear to you, but ſufficiently to render life more ſupportable. When we are in the flower of our age, we repair the loſs of former friends by the acquiring of new; but thoſe who, like us, are burthened with the load of declining life do not contract new friendſhips; for ſuch ties are only ſtrengthened by an equality of youth, and a parity of opinions, taſte, and paſſions. The riſing generation has ſhades that differ from the paſt; nor do the ſplendid inclinations of youth aſſimilate with the phlegm which, more or leſs, predominates in age. We muſt therefore

therefore be ſatisfied with making acquaintance, nor attempt to form the ſtrong bonds of new friendſhip, unleſs indeed ſome confeſſor ſhould, by his aſcendancy, ſubjugate our hearts. I will pledge myſelf that, with reſpect to you and I, this will never be the caſe. Offenſive alliances with the cuculati, for the conqueſt of new Jeruſalem by their aid, are only for great monarchs. We who are limited and confined in this world cannot form projects ſo vaſt. Some heretic muſt certainly be burnt in Spain, as a ſin-offering, for the amours of the white cow. We cannot but own this is leſs a ſubject of mirth than of compaſſion, recollecting the blindneſs of the poor human race, for whom happineſs, certainly, was not formed. The Inquiſition will commit new ravages in Spain, and, by its tyrannical deſpotiſm, ſtifle the genius of the nation.

Poor Voltaire ſuffers another kind of perſecution at Ferney; I am obliged to you for informing me of the cauſe of his chagrin. Not to mention his uncommon talents, his great age ought to be his protection.

You cannot entirely conquer your affliction, and I have, for a week, been kept in mortal inquietude for the health of my brother Henry; who, having gone to viſit our ſiſter of Brunſwick, was ſuddenly attacked by an inflamma-

tion

tion of the lungs. He has fortunately overcome the diſeaſe, and his recovery has reſtored my peace.

Such are the griefs of us three; and, were we acquainted with all that relates to a multitude of individuals, we ſhould not find their ſituation better. Inconſiderate, inconſtant, and turbulent, youth alone is thoughtleſs for the future, and is happy becauſe it does not reflect. Nor ought we to meditate on what we cannot amend. Our misfortunes apologiſe for our incongruity; and we muſt weaken and forget them, if we can. I own it will be a real pleaſure to me to meet and converſe with you: it will be a moment of happineſs which I ſhall place on the creditor ſide of the account, as a compenſation for many diſagreeable moments. I propoſe to convince you of my gratitude, for it is a ſatisfaction I owe you.

On which I pray, &c.

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LETTER CLVI.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, April 28, 1777.

M. DE CATT will inform your majeſty of the mournful reaſons which will not permit me to come and lay all the ſentiments of gratitude, veneration, and devotion which I owe you, at your majeſty's feet. I will not repeat circumſtances ſo afflicting to myſelf, and ſo wearisome to your majeſty. I feel my ſituation the more ſenſibly becauſe I can certainly find no ſubſtitute to the pleaſure which I promiſed myſelf of paſſing ſome moments with your majeſty, of ſeeing, liſtening to, and philoſophiſing with you; and of converſing of all that intereſts you, much rather than of that which intereſts myſelf. I do not, however, ſire, renounce the hope of once more ſeeing your majeſty; but I neither dare form projects nor make promiſes, from the fear that I again ſhall not be able to fulfil them. As I flatter myſelf I ſhall not be always languiſhing and unhappy, I perhaps may find ſome moments of my life which I may conſecrate to your majeſty; and theſe will indubitably be to me the moſt agreeable of moments. May fortune in this be propitious!

Your

Your majeſty has crowned all your former favours by the preparations, of every kind, which you have been pleaſed to make, for my eaſe and convenience on the journey. They never ſhall be abuſed by me, whenever I ſhall find the want of them; and one of my greateſt ſubjects of regret is that I cannot come in perſon to teſtify my tender gratitude to your majeſty.

I reproach myſelf that I am thus the melancholy ſubject of my own letter. I ſhall ſpeak with more pleaſure on what is paſſing here. The comte von Falkenſtein, whoſe real name is known to your majeſty*, has been at Paris a fortnight. I have not yet ſeen him, becauſe of my retired mode of life; and probably ſhall not, unleſs he ſhould viſit our academies, which is at preſent uncertain. Should he come, I intend to read, at the French Academy, a ſhort eulogium on Fenelon, which may intereſt him; and, at the Academy of Sciences, ſome reflexions on the theory of muſic. They have both been long written, or, however indifferent they may be, I ſhould not be capable of writing them at preſent. This prince ſeems to be to-

* Falkenſtein was the travelling name the emperor aſſumed, that he might, as a private perſon, inſpect things which, as an emperor, forms and ceremonies would not have permitted him to have examined. T.

lerably ſucceſsful here; he is thought to be polite, affable, and deſirous of information. He has declared that, ſhould he viſit the academies, he will hear no compliments; and, though it is our trade to pay them, he ſhall be obeyed. Wherever he goes he has neither precurſor nor even attendants. He ſeems to take little pleaſure in our theatres, but receives much more ſatisfaction from inſpecting uſeful eſtabliſhments, or ſuch as are intended ſo to be. He went the other day to viſit the hoſpital of the Hotel Dieu, and beheld with horror the cruelty with which the ſick are there treated, where they lie ſix in a bed, the dead beſide the dying, and the dying beſide a patient recovering. Nor is it becauſe the Hotel Dieu is not exceedingly rich, conſequently in a ſtate to do much better; it is becauſe there are *adminiſtrators*, to which I need add nothing.

Rumour ſays the emperor means to viſit our ports. He will find our marine not in the ſplendid ſtate in which it was, for a ſhort time, under Louis XIV. but at leaſt tolerable, and much better than it was left by the bad policy of cardinal de Fleuri. Good citizens hope the emperor will inform the king his brother-in-law of the dreadful management of the Hotel Dieu, of which the young monarch, no doubt, is ignorant;

tant; and that perhaps ſome remedy for this horrible abuſe will be the reſult.—God grant!

We are much occupied concerning the inſurgents, and very impatient to learn what will be the ſucceſs of the deciſive campaign which will ſoon open. We are told the Engliſh depopulate Germany, to ſend troops to America. It does not ſeem to me to be very polite, and ſtill leſs honourable, to ſee many petty German princes thus ſend their ſubjects two thouſand leagues to be murdered, that their maſters may maintain an opera-houſe. It is reported too that moſt of the ſoldiers ſettle in America, and this ſeems to me the beſt part they can take.

The tyrant of Portugal is fallen! The accounts of his deſpotiſm excite horror! But perhaps they are exaggerated *. The Inquiſition continues its vexations in Spain, as we hear; and, ſince the king allows it ſo to do, follows its trade.

Accept, ſire, with your uſual goodneſs, thoſe expreſſions of regret that I am unable to convey, any otherwiſe than by writing to your majeſty, of the tender and profound reſpect with which I ſhall, to the end of life, &c.

* The marquis de Pombal, who was removed, from his office of firſt miniſter, on the death of the king of Portugal. T.

LETTER CLVII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, May 23, 1777.

I THINK it my duty to render an account to your majeſty of a converſation which I have had the honour to hold, with the count von Falkenſtein, and in which your majeſty is intereſted. He came on Saturday laſt, the ſeventeenth, to the French Academy; and, after liſtening to the various readings, he had the condeſcenſion to ſeat himſelf beſide me. He accoſted me in the moſt obliging manner, and added—"It is reported you mean to go to Ger-"many this year, and that you intend to be-"come wholly German." I anſwered, I had indeed formed the project of going to pay my court to your majeſty, and paſs ſome of the ſummer months with you; that I had very much deſired to undertake this journey, but that the ill ſtate of my health would not permit me; and that my affliction at this was increaſed, becauſe of the exceſſive bounty with which I had been invited to Pruſſia, by your majeſty.

"If I do not miſtake," ſaid he, "you have "already ſeen the king of Pruſſia."—"Twice," replied I; "once in the year 1756, at Weſel,

"where

"where I only remained a few days, and the "other time in 1763, when I had the honour "to pass three or four months with the king. "Since this time," added I, "my wishes again "to see his majesty have been continual, but the "gratification of them has always been prevent-"ed. I particularly regretted my inability to pay "my court to him, the year in which he met "*the emperor* at Neiss; but, at the present mo-"ment, I have nothing more to wish, on this "subject."—"It was very natural," answered he, "that *the emperor*, who was young, and de-"sirous of instruction, should wish to see a mo-"narch like the king of Prussia, whose renown "is so great, who is so famous a commander, "and who has acted so capital a part. It was a "scholar desirous of visiting his master." Those were his very words.

"I could wish," said I, "that the count von "Falkenstein could see the letters which the "king of Prussia did me the honour to write, "after the interview; he there would perceive "the opinion of his majesty, respecting *the em-*"*peror*, was that which has since been con-"firmed, by the universal voice."

I imagined your majesty would not be sorry to be informed of this conversation. I shall not add any dull detail of what the emperor was

pleaſed to add, relative to myſelf; I ſhall only mention that I read two ſhort eſſays, in the aſſembly. The one conſiſted of ſome ſynonymous words, in the manner of the abbé Girard; among which were the terms *ſimplicity* and *modeſty*; which ended by a ſlight and indirect application to the emperor, and which he ſeemed to me to feel with ſatisfaction. The other was a very ſhort eulogium on Fenelon, in which likewiſe were ſeveral alluſions relative to this perſon; and, among others, one on the travels which Fenelon was deſirous his pupil, the duc de Bourgogne, ſhould undertake, and that he ſhould travel without the pomp and retinue of a prince.

The comte von Falkenſtein has taſted the fruits of the ſimplicity with which he travels at the theatre. Some days ſince he went to ſee Oedipus, and at that paſſage of the firſt ſcene of the fourth act in which Jocaſta recites the following verſes,

Ce roi, plus grand que ſa fortune,
Dédaignoit, comme vous, une pompe importune *.

the whole audience turned toward him, and applauded repeatedly. This ſimplicity is an ex-

* The monarch, ſuperior to his ſtate, like you, importunate pomp diſdained.

cellent

cellent example which the emperor has afforded our princes, who do not at preſent travel like him; and this example was ſet him by another king, who may well be regarded as a model in all things, for ſovereigns. The emperor has examined with pleaſure every thing here which merits to be examined; he has given marks of much underſtanding, and ſeems to be deſirous of information. On Friday laſt, he viſited the Academy of Belles Lettres, when the members read ſuch of the moſt intereſting paſſages, from their memoirs, as had been written within the laſt ſix months. Among them was one on the opinions of the ancients, concerning the rage of gaming; at which he turned to M. Turgot, who preſided at the aſſembly, and ſaid, "This memoir is ap-"plicable to the age." The rage of gaming is in reality greater than ever, at court, in deſpite of the good example of his majeſty.

As the intention of this letter is entirely to inform your majeſty of the journey of the Emperor, I ſhall add no rhodomontade of Arthur and his knights, by talking of myſelf. My health continues exceedingly languid, nor has the fine weather hitherto effected any great change. It is true that this fine weather is very bad weather, for we have had continual rains during ſix weeks.

I conclude by renewing the regret I feel that I cannot repair to your majeſty's feet, there to lay thoſe ſentiments of admiration, gratitude, and profound reſpect which, for ſo many reaſons, I am indebted to you, and with which I ſhall, all my life, &c.

LETTER CLVIII.

From the King.

June 1, 1777.

I AM ſorry to hear of your ill ſtate of health; it is a very unſeaſonable diſappointment of my expectations, which had been raiſed very high by the hope of ſeeing you. We muſt once again hope that another occaſion will be more favourable. I underſtand all France is at preſent occupied by the count von Falkenſtein. He is the firſt emperor, ſince Charles V. who has been in France; but his journey will be neither ſo expenſive nor ſo dangerous, as was that of his predeceſſor. Auſtria and France are allied, and he has no miſtreſs on whom he might beſtow his diamond rings. He indicates great ardour to obtain information; for which reaſon he

he neglects trifles, and fixes his attention on things relative only to government. He is very affable, and indeed ſomewhat too much ſo.

I can divine the ſubſtance of your diſcourſe on Fenelon. You would not forget his Telemachus; and this would afford you an opportunity of treating on the moſt deſirable perfections of a prince; thus, while you ſhould draw your picture, every perſon would recollect the young monarch who was your auditor. Such praiſe is artful, and cannot diſpleaſe, becauſe the frankincenſe is not rudely wafted in the face of the perſon praiſed.

I have lately read a work entitled *La Philoſophie de la Nature**, by one Deliſle, in which I have found ſome good things, ſome crude opinions, and not ſo much method as might be deſired, in a philoſophic work. Your prieſts are ſaid to be enraged againſt the author, and that he is baniſhed France. His book, certainly, does not merit ſo much ſeverity.

I am on the eve of my departure for Pruſſia; when I return my letters ſhall be longer. At preſent I ſhall limit myſelf to good wiſhes for your entire recovery, in the hope that I ſhall perſonally be able to aſſure you of my whole eſteem.

On which I pray, &c.

* The Philoſophy of Nature.

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LETTER CLIX.

From the King.

June 3, 1777.

I AM ſorry to hear your health is not reſtored; we muſt hope that, by time and regimen, it will recover its original vigour.

I perceive it is difficult to propheſy. I had imagined what your diſcourſe before the emperor would be; but the manner in which you managed the ſubject was ſtill more artful, and more flattering. I am exceedingly obliged to you, for what you ſaid to this monarch. I am not ſurpriſed that he ſhould meet approbation ſo great at Paris; he has much underſtanding, is affable, and deſirous of information. He ſaw himſelf in a country where there are a multitude of things to admire, and he applauded with judgment; not like ignorance, aſtoniſhed at the ſight of new objects. The French are accuſtomed to meet with Germans who have ſcarcely left the ſchool, and who in general frequent tolerably bad company, in Paris. Surpriſe muſt have been increaſed when they ſaw the head of the nation better educated than they imagined monarchs can be. Should the queen,

his

his mother, travel to that country from which no man returns, he would ſoon make himſelf the ſubject of converſation.

M. de Jaucourt, the relation of the Encyclopediſt, has been to ſee the review at Magdeburg, and is one of the moſt amiable Frenchmen I have long met. We converſed much concerning you. He poſſeſſes knowledge. I queſtioned him reſpecting his relation, who ſtudied phyſic, under Boerhaave, for his own ſatisfaction. One of his family was the governeſs of my ſiſter of Sweden, and of another of my ſiſters, who is dead. He went with me as far as Pomerania, and is gone to Vienna, to ſee the Auſtrian troops, having obtained the emperor's permiſſion. I myſelf have been as far as the country of Copernicus, which is not at preſent the country of philoſophers; but, if the ſoil be not changed, I hope they may there be produced.

A diſcourſe has appeared, full of ſatyrical truths againſt government; but theſe are but words, which enter at the ear without making any impreſſions on the heart. War ſtill continues to be made on the poor Americans.

Grimm is to paſs through Berlin, on his road to France, whence he is ſhortly to return to Ruſſia. If he do not acquire a knowledge of the world, no man can. He has only to viſit

Sweden

Sweden and Greenland to have been every where. I take more pleaſure in ſtudy than in thus poſting over the earth. Men of all countries reſemble each other; their paſſions are the ſame. Some indeed are more and ſome leſs ardent, but the reſult will be little different, and the variety of manners and cuſtoms may be learnt as well from reading as from ſeeing. Anaxagoras only is worthy the trouble of being ſought after. Adieu, my dear D'Alembert. Health and courage! By the aid of theſe, I do not yet deſpair of meeting you.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CLX.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, July 28, 1777.

I AM penetrated with gratitude, for the intereſt which your majeſty is kind enough to teſtify for my health, and for the part you have the goodneſs to take in the mortification I ſuffer, that I cannot lay all the ſentiments I owe you at your majeſty's feet; which is increaſed by the impoſſibility that I ſhould find any ſubſtitute for the ſweet ſatisfaction I had promiſed myſelf. My

misfortune is such that I cannot even, at this moment, taste the only, and the melancholy, pleasures which remain. The weather is so rainy, and even so cold, that I cannot so much as walk, though that was my sole resource. My winter friends being all dispersed, I almost daily find myself alone, with feelings more than ever alive to the losses I have suffered, and to the conviction that they never can be replaced.

But I abuse your majesty's bounty, by thus insisting on so gloomy a subject. Rather let me testify the pleasure I feel at learning, from M. de Catt, that your majesty's health is excellent; and that it not only supports the prodigious exercise, which your majesty takes, but that it even gains strength.

The count von Falkenstein, who left us at the end of May, has also travelled hard, on his visits through France. He will no doubt profit, for his own administration, by the good and ill which he has every where met, beginning with the metropolis. I had before heard, from more than one good judge, though this were needless after hearing your majesty's opinion, the same remarks which you have been pleased to make, relative to the empress queen; although I never have had the honour to approach that princess, of whom, if I had, I should not have taken the

freedom

freedom to judge. She merits, at leaſt in my opinion, praiſe, for having inſpired her children with that love of ſimplicity, and with that affability which renders princes ſo dear to their people. I imagine the emperor, at preſent, is in his own provinces; he was to paſs through Geneva; and, I ſuppoſe, after having ſeen ſo many things, ſome of which were ſcarcely worthy the trouble, he will likewiſe wiſh to ſee the patriarch of Ferney, who, by ſuch an Imperial viſit, would have years added to his life. It is long ſince I heard from him, though I believe him to be tolerably well. I imagine the poor devil of the author of *La Philoſophie de la Nature* is now with him, after having been ſo cruelly and fooliſhly perſecuted by the wretched Janſeniſts, who, at the Chatelet*, ſit in judgment on the lives and liberties of men. Our lords the parliament have treated him better, becauſe they were in awe of public opprobrium; for the honour, however, of the magiſtracy, they have not dared to abſolve him, but thought themſelves obliged to give him a gentle reprimand; which he, indeed, in ſome degree merited, for not having written a better book. Your majeſty has paſſed a juſt ſentence on this rhapſody, which deſerved not

* The Weſtminſter-hall of Paris.

to

to have been ſo much the ſubject of converſation.

Grimm, we are told, will return to France, this winter; again to repair to Peterſburg. True it is, I would travel farther in ſearch of health; but I ſhould travel in vain; Hygeia would fly faſter than I could purſue. I am, however, ſomething better, juſt at preſent, thanks to the ſummer ſeaſon, bad though it be; but my ſtomach is only waiting for winter, to play me its uſual tricks. I muſt prepare for battle, and in the mean time be patient.

It is long ſince I have ſeen my former coadjutor, the Encyclopediſt, the chevalier de Jaucourt. He lives in great retirement, and, as it is ſaid, is preparing a new edition of Morery, for he can only labour on works which contain ſeveral volumes in folio. The ſhort productions of Racine and La Fontaine have fewer words, but more ideas. We all act as well as we can, for our own amuſement, but it is not equally eaſy to amuſe others. The quaker Freeport, in the *Ecoſſaiſe** of Voltaire, rightly ſays, it is more difficult to procure amuſement than wealth; and the difficulty is increaſed when we endeavour to amuſe the ſplenetic.

* *The Scotchwoman*—well known to the Engliſh ſtage, by Mr. Colman's tranſlation, entitled—*The Engliſh Merchant*. T.

I have

I have read the ſpeech of Mr. Pitt, or lord Chatham, who would have acted much more wiſely had he kept his firſt name. This ſpeech is, in reality, as your majeſty ſays, full of melancholy truths, but to which the Engliſh government has not attended. It madly purſues the American war, in which it will be unſucceſsful, and has given us time to reſtore our marine, and render it capable of oppoſing the Britiſh flag. The laſt intelligence we have received does not announce a ſplendid campaign, on the part of the Engliſh.

Were there no indiſcretion in ſuch queſtions, I ſhould be very deſirous of hearing your majeſty's opinion of that war, of the political and military conduct of the Engliſh, and of the manœuvres of Waſhington. I ſhould not dare to aſk ſuch opinion, were I not certain you will ſay more in a ſingle phraſe than others would in a volume. The characteriſtics of your political, military, and literary judgment, are terſeneſs, brevity, and preciſion; and the Venetian advocate would ſay to you, as to his judges—*E ſempre ben* *. But I am afraid this ſame advocate, were he to read my preſent long letter, would bid me be ſilent, and reſpect the precious moments of your majeſty. I therefore conclude,

* It is always right, or good.

by

by requeſting you to accept, with your uſual goodneſs, the tender veneration with which I ſhall, to the end of life, remain, &c.

LETTER CLXI.

From the King.

Auguſt 13, 1777.

I BEGIN my letter by a quotation from Chaulieu, as a leſſon to old men like us.

> Ainſi, ſans chagrin, ſans noirceurs,
> De la fin de mes jours poiſon lent & funeſte,
> Je sème encore de quelques fleurs
> Le peu de chemin qui me reſte*.

Thinking thus, the clouds of the mind are diſperſed, and mild tranquillity ſucceeds thoſe agitations by which we were troubled It is not for me to preach to ſages; it is a philoſophic poet who ſpeaks.

I hear the count von Falkenſtein has viſited ports, arſenals, ſhips and manufactures, but not Voltaire. Ports, arſenals, ſhips, and manufactures, are every where to be met with; but, to produce a Voltaire, ages are neceſſary. Had I

* Thus, void of ſorrow, void of gloom, which at the cloſe of life are poiſonous to peace, I ſtrew my ſhort remaining road with flowers.

been the emperor, I ſhould not have paſſed Ferney, without having liſtened to the old patriarch; that I might at leaſt ſay I had heard, had ſeen him. I believe, from ſome anecdotes which have reached me, that a certain lady Thereſa, who is very little of a philoſopher, has forbidden her ſon to viſit the patriarch of toleration. The good qualities which the emperor poſſeſſes he derives from himſelf; they are his own ſtock; it is his own character which has improved his education. I was intimately acquainted with marſhal Bathyani, who was his tutor. He was a worthy man, and capable of inſpiring a young prince with good principles. I once again repeat, Helvetius is miſtaken, in his work on the underſtanding, when he affirms that men are born with nearly the ſame degree of capability. This is contrary to experience. Men are born with an indelible character. Education may impart knowledge, and render the pupil aſhamed of his defects; but education never can change the nature of things. The root remains, and each individual bears in himſelf the principle of his actions. This muſt be ſo, becauſe we diſcover there are eternal laws. Is it probable, having found there is any one determinate thing in the univerſe, that all things ſhould not be ſo? I know I am ſpeaking on a grand queſtion; but, when I addreſs myſelf to

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the moſt ſage of the philoſophers of the Gauls, it is a queſtion for him to reſolve.

You wiſh to know what I think of the conduct of the Engliſh. I think with the public, that they have ſinned againſt good faith, by not keeping the compact which they had made with their colonies; and, by an ill-timed declaration of war, againſt one of the American ſtates, from which nothing but evil could reſult. The Engliſh were ſtupidly ignorant of the ſtrength of the colonies; and imagined they might be ſubjected by general Gage, with five or ſix thouſand men. They have hired troops without having provided tranſports to convey them to America; they have bought proviſions in the London markets for an army which was to fight in Penſylvania; in fine there are no kind of blunders with which they may not be reproached. Why ſeparate the corps which Carleton commanded, and that of which Burgoyne is at the head, by a diſtance of three hundred miles? How could theſe corps, at ſo great a diſtance, afford each other mutual aid? In a ſituation like this, was it neceſſary, in pure gaiety of heart, to quarrel with the Ruſſians; to offend the Dutch, by their inſolent arrogance; and, by their ill conduct, to increaſe the number of their enemies?

Obſerve, however, I declare the veil of futu-

rity is ſo thick that it is as impenetrable to my eyes as it is to the eyes of others. Were I to follow the example of Cicero, and foretel what a certain combination of events ſeem to forebode, I ſhould perhaps venture an opinion that the colonies, according to appearances, will become independent; becauſe they certainly will not be cruſhed this campaign, and the government of the God-damn-mes will find it difficult to dip into the purſes of the people, to furniſh ſupplies for the next campaign; and becauſe, before the approaching ſpring, war will be declared between the French and Engliſh, who will battle with each other in the colonies; and, ſhould not fortune be exceedingly averſe, France perhaps may recover Canada.

Reveries here are, ſince reveries you wiſh; but events ſhall be as it ſhall pleaſe the fates; and, happen what will, it need not prevent us from "ſtrewing the ſhort race we have to run "with flowers."

I know not what is become of Grimm. It is ſaid he has left Peterſburg, in the company of another monarch, who travels incognito. He is therefore very probably at Stockholm now; yet I think you will ſee him again at Paris.

With reſpect to yourſelf, my dear D'Alembert, I know not whether I ever ſhall, or ſhall not,

not, ſee you more. This will not hinder me from wiſhing you every kind of proſperity, finer weather than we have had this ſummer, the mild influence of internal content, and a ſprinkling of cheerfulneſs, which conſtitutes the felicity of life.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CLXII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, September 22, 1777.

RETURNING from the country where I had been to paſs ſome weeks for the recovery of my health, which is but little better, I found the letter at Paris, with which your majeſty has deigned to honour me, and the very philoſophic reverie which it includes, and immediately ſit down to write an anſwer.

Firſt I muſt humbly thank your majeſty for the advice, which you and Chaulieu give me, to ſtrew the ſhort race I have to run with flowers. You, ſire, ſpeak of theſe things exceedingly at your eaſe, crowned as you are with every kind of glory, and poſſeſſed of the power to daily render men happy. I, who have not the ſame

advantages, can only ſtrew my path with thiſtles; or, at beſt, with blue bottles, ſuch as infeſt corn fields, which could do full as well without them.

I have been as much ſurpriſed as your majeſty, at the little deſire the count von Falkenſtein has ſhewn to ſee the patriarch of Ferney; and I have no doubt but your majeſty has juſtly divined the cauſe of this *apparent* indifference; for I wiſh to believe, for the honour of the monarch, it is not *real*. At leaſt people are well perſuaded it is not the reſult of his ſiſter's advice, who is ſaid highly to eſteem the patriarch, of which eſteem ſhe has more than once ſent him aſſurances.

Notwithſtanding the taking of Ticonderago, and the new advantages which the Engliſh promiſe themſelves, I think, with your majeſty (in whoſe predictions in this as in many other things I believe) that theſe very inſolent Iſlanders will not prevail over their colonies; and I confeſs I ſhall not be ſorry to ſee them thus humbled, which, by their folly, they will merit to be. It does not however appear that they mean to renounce the project; and ſhould they, as they probably will, attempt another campaign, our poor France, it ſhould ſeem, will have another year to breathe; for I have no doubt

they

they will declare war againſt us as ſoon as they are able, which I rather wiſh we may be than ſuppoſe we are ſtrong enough to maintain.

Grimm is really at Stockholm, in the ſuite of the king of Sweden. I know he propoſed going to Berlin; and perhaps he has already paid his court to your majeſty. This is the only happineſs I envy him, and which I do not yet deſpair but that I may myſelf enjoy. Such is my laſt and only hope, which, at leaſt, I delight to nouriſh, though my diſordered machine ſhould never permit it to be realiſed.

I now come to the excellent reverie which your majeſty has ſent me. How many people, and even princes, who are wide awake, do not think ſo connectedly as you dream! But, for the misfortune of the human race, yours, alas! is not enough a dream. The ſubjects it treats on are but too real. Reflecting on human follies, while reading this reverie, and ſeeing how charmingly they there are ridiculed, I repeat

On ne peut s'empêcher d'en pleurer, et d'en rire *.

On this occaſion I take the liberty to offer a hint to your majeſty, the object of which is the progreſs of knowledge; which, in deſpite of your efforts, and particularly of your example, is ſo ſlow. In your academy, ſire, you have a

* At once we are forced to weep and laugh.

claſs for ſpeculative philoſophy, which, under the direction of your majeſty, might propoſe very intereſting and very uſeful ſubjects for the prize queſtions.—As for example,—"Whether "it be uſeful to deceive the people."—We have never dared to propoſe this great queſtion to the French Academy, becauſe the diſſertations, ſent for the prize, muſt, to the misfortune of reaſon, undergo cenſure by two doctors of the Sorbonne; and becauſe it would be impoſſible, with people like theſe, to write any thing rational. But your majeſty has neither prejudices nor doctors of the Sorbonne; and ſuch a queſtion might very worthily be propoſed by you, to all the philoſophers of Europe, who would take a pleaſure in the enquiry. Such ſubjects, in my opinion, are of higher importance than thoſe which have hitherto been propoſed by that metaphyſical claſs. The laſt appeared to me an exceedingly ſtrange one, from its unintelligibility. I have met with no perſon who did not think the ſame; and I am very certain my friend La Grange was not conſulted. He would moſt aſſuredly have prevented the academy the vexation of being ſubjected to ridicule.

I take the liberty, ſire, to add a memorial to this letter, on the ſubject of which I moſt earneſtly entreat your majeſty to order a circumſtantial

ſtantial anſwer to be given. The ſubject itſelf is ſo intereſting that I have no doubt of the ſucceſs of my requeſt. The Royal Society of Phyſicians at Paris conſiſt of the moſt ſelect and beſt informed perſons of the faculty; and, knowing the bounty with which your majeſty honours me, they have addreſſed themſelves to me, to preſent this memorial to your majeſty, that they may obtain the information they deſire. I moſt humbly beg you will be pleaſed to give orders for that purpoſe.

We have, as uſual, a very fine autumn, after having had, till the beginning of Auguſt, a moſt villanous ſummer. I dread the approach of the bad weather, and even begin already to perceive the increaſe of the cold. But let it do with me as it pleaſes, provided it will but ſpare the truly precious health of your majeſty.

I am, with the moſt tender veneration, &c.

LETTER CLXIII.

From the King.

October 5, 1777.

I AM perſuaded the air of the country muſt have been ſalutary to you, eſpecially the change

change of place, and objects, which tend to expel gloomy ideas and impart ſtrength to our thinking powers, ſufficient for them to recover their natural tone.

Colonel Grimm has been here, and I have confided another ſcrawl to his charge, more ſerious than my reverie, which I ſubmit to the cenſure of Philoſophy; for ſhe only has the right to judge whether men reaſon well or ill. You will, perhaps, think me a great ſpoiler of paper, but you will be leſs aſtoniſhed at this if you will but remember it is my method to meditate in writing, that I may correct myſelf. I find the method to be good, becauſe we may forget our reflections, which when committed to paper are never forgotten.

Give me good humour, my friend, for it is the only lenitive that can render the burthen of life ſupportable! I do not ſay that we always have the power to command this diſpoſition of mind; however, by gliding over the ſuperficies of evil, and imitating Democritus, we may find amuſement in that which, to a miſanthrope, would appear inſipid. Voltaire, for example, may preſerve all his good humour, although he has not ſeen the count von Falkenſtein. How many ſages have eſtimated the not having ſeen ſovereigns as a part of their felicity! A viſit from

an emperor might flatter the vanity of a common man, but Voltaire ſhould be above ſuch trifles.

You ſpeak of a queſtion to propoſe to the academy. Alas! We have recently loſt poor Lambert, one of our beſt members. I know not who could treat the ſubject philoſophically; Beguelin I believe to be the only perſon; but I ſhall ſee what can be done. If we conſult the acataleptic ſect, we muſt acknowledge that, to the ſight of man, moſt truths are impenetrable; and that we are in a kind of cloud, a fog of error, which for ever deprives us of the light. How therefore may man be certain, ſome mathematical truths excepted, being deceived himſelf, that he ſhall not deceive others? He who would deliberately impoſe opinions on the public for his own intereſt, and to promote any private views, is no doubt culpable. But is it not lawful to deceive mankind, when they are deceived for their own good? Thus, for example, is it wrong to diſguiſe a potion which the patient is averſe to take, to induce him to ſwallow it, that being the only means of cure? Or is it a crime to diminiſh the loſs of a great battle, that a whole nation may not be diſcouraged; or, in fine, to conceal ſome misfortune, or danger, which a man might feel too ſenſibly, were it told without

precaution,

precaution, that he may be prediſpoſed to act with fortitude or reſignation?

Ancient hiſtory atteſts that ambition has ever made religion its ladder. Mahomet, and numerous other chiefs of ſects, confirm the fact. They have no doubt been culpable; but let it, on the other hand, be remembered that moſt men are timid, and credulous; and that, if ſome religion had not been announced to them, they would have invented one for themſelves. This is the reaſon why religious worſhip is diſcovered to exiſt almoſt over the whole ſurface of the globe. As ſoon as theſe religions have taken root, the fanatic multitude will have them reſpected; and woe to the man who wiſhes to undeceive them; becauſe there are few people who are capable of reaſoning conſiſtently. This ſhould not prevent every philoſopher from combating fanaticiſm, becauſe it is a delirium which is productive of horrid crimes, and of acts the moſt abominable.

I now come to the remedy which you requeſt, and you will herewith receive all the explanations you wiſh, with a ſmall doſe of the preparation. The fact is certain; the inventor has performed wonderful cures, of which there are the beſt proofs. Some of it ſhould be ſent to the Engliſh parliament, which, it ſhould ſeem, has

has been bitten by a mad dog. Its members act like lunatics. You will certainly go to war with theſe God-damn-mes; their colonies will become independent; and France will recover loſt Canada. I wiſh ſuch predictions may be more indubitable than the oracles of Calchas.

You always leave me that which was at the bottom of Pandora's box. But you know the proverb—*On déſeſpére, quand on eſpére toujours* *.

If I am not able to ſee you in this world, I appoint you a meeting in the Elyſian fields; where I ſhall find you in company with Archimedes, Caſſini, Anaxagoras, and Newton. Be in no haſte, however, to undertake the journey; for this I am too much intereſted in your preſervation to wiſh.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CLXIV.

From the King.

November 11, 1777.

I HAVE ordered Catt to ſend you every information, relative to the remedy diſcovered for the bite of a mad dog. There is no need of

* Hope never accompliſhed breeds deſpair.

any

any permiſſion to enter into correſpondence with our academy; it receives all letters addreſſed to it, and returns anſwers.

I juſt add, I think it neceſſary to inform you I have been ſurpriſed to ſee letters which I have written to you in print, and to hear there are others, circulated through Paris, in manuſcript. I know not whether, as ſome affirm, it be certain that Pythagoras was the contemporary of Numa; but it is very certain that there are no letters remaining addreſſed by Numa to Pythagoras. In like manner, we do not find that Plato, who was at the court of Dionyſius, publiſhed his correſpondence with that tyrant. Ariſtotle has not tranſmitted to us any of the epiſtles addreſſed to him by Alexander. The philoſophers of our times act on principles different from thoſe of the ancients, and their conduct will impoſe ſilence on modern princes.

On which I pray, &c.

LET-

LETTER CLXV.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, November 27, 1777.

M. GRIMM, on his arrival at Paris, gave me the packet with which your majeſty charged him for me. I have read the excellent writing it contains with avidity, and I thought immediately to have returned my moſt humble thanks to your majeſty; but I recollected that, having ſo lately written, I ſhould importune you by too frequent letters; and that you have better employment than that of ſo often reading my trifles. I rather choſe to employ the time in repeatedly reading, and in cauſing others, who were deſerving of the honour, to read a work ſo worthy of your majeſty, ſo full of the moſt excellent principles of government, written with ſo much reaſon, wit, and elegance, and in which your majeſty proves how ſage your precepts are, by the care and ſucceſs with which you practiſe them yourſelf. Your conduct, and the example you afford to other monarchs, are even ſuperior to the ſage and beneficial leſſons which they may extract from your writings.

May

May you long continue thus to afford them both precept and example!

It is a month ſince I had the misfortune to loſe madame Geoffrin, the only true female friend that was left me. After the loſs of the woman with whom I paſſed my evenings, I went, to aſſuage my ſorrow, and ſat every morning with madame Geoffrin, whoſe friendſhip was my reſource. At preſent I neither know what to do with evening nor morning, and I rid myſelf of them without profit or pleaſure. I aſk pardon of your majeſty for ſpeaking continually of myſelf, and am afraid I abuſe your goodneſs.

When I had the honour to propoſe the important queſtion to your majeſty—"Whether "it be uſeful to deceive the people"—My intention was not preciſely that you ſhould command your academy to examine the ſubject; but that it ſhould be propoſed by the metaphyſical claſs, as a prize ſubject; which can only be done for the next prize ſubject, ſince there is a queſtion already propoſed that, unfortunately, cannot be retracted.

Since your majeſty is pleaſed to wiſh to enter into the queſtion with me, I think, under correction, it is neceſſary to diſtinguiſh between errors which are tranſitory, and temporary, and thoſe which are permanent. It is paſt diſpute that

that we may, and perhaps ought, to indulge the people in temporary error for ſome greater good, or to avoid ſome greater evil, of which your majeſty brings examples that cannot be conteſted. There are greater difficulties relative to permanent errors; and I know not whether encouraging them would not always be rather inconvenient than advantageous. But the ſubject requires much diſcuſſion, for which reaſon it is that I wiſh to ſee the queſtion propoſed, to the philoſophers of all Europe, by the moſt philoſophic of ſovereigns.

Well may your majeſty ſay the Engliſh parliament is not very philoſophic, and that its conduct is that of a legion of lunatics. We wait with impatience for the intereſting news of the cloſe of the campaign, which, fortunately for the enemies of England, and unfortunately for humanity, will probably not be the laſt. The meeting of the parliament is the moment on which much depends. We ſhall ſee whether England will conſent to ruin herſelf, that ſhe may completely lay waſte and depopulate her colonies.

The ſtatuary Taffart, who has lately written to me, appears ardently zealous for the ſervice of your majeſty, and deſirous of increaſingly meriting your favour, which I take the liberty to re-

queſt you will beſtow on this honeſt and able artiſt, who deſerves, from character and talents, to be happy.

I have a propoſal to make, which may be agreeable to your majeſty. In one of your letters, you have done me the honour to ſpeak with eſteem of the work entitled *La Philoſophie de la Nature*, the author of which, M. Deliſle, has been ſo unworthily treated by the inquiſitors of the Chatelet. Thoſe of the parliament have acted with leſs ſeverity; but this unfortunate cauſe has ruined his fortune, and he will have need, in order to eſcape the danger that threatens him, to attach himſelf to a protector who is a philoſopher. His ardent deſire is that your majeſty would be pleaſed to become this protector. He is a man of thirty, of a noble and diſtinguiſhed mien, with great mildneſs of character, worth of principles and morals, and much knowledge, as is proved by his work. If I am not miſtaken, your majeſty would be pleaſed with him. He would conceive the moſt tender veneration for, and become entirely devoted to, your majeſty; and, by the charms and amenity of his converſation, would afford you ſome pleaſure, when you relax from your fatigues. Should your majeſty conſent to attach him to yourſelf, and be pleaſed to inform me on what conditions, I

have no doubt he will accept them; provided thoſe conditions, as I cannot but ſuppoſe, be ſuch as to induce him to hope a fortunate deſtiny for the remainder of his life. M. de Voltaire joins with me in the ſame requeſt to your majeſty, and we wait your anſwer.

I am, with the moſt tender and the moſt reſpectful devotion, &c.

LETTER CLXVI.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, November 28, 1777.

I AM new thanks in your majeſty's debt, for the order you have been pleaſed to give, that an anſwer ſhould be returned to the requeſt I took the liberty to make.

But a more preſſing affair occupies me at this moment, and will not permit me to defer anſwering the afflicting letter I have juſt received from your majeſty.

Your majeſty complains that ſome of the letters you have done me the honour to write to me have been printed, and that others are circulated through Paris in manuſcript.

My apology muſt be an exact ſtatement of facts.

Afflicted as I was by the loſs which I laſt year ſuffered, I opened my heart to your majeſty, with whoſe bounty I was ſo well acquainted. You had the goodneſs to anſwer by writing two letters, ſo full of reaſon, feeling, and wiſdom, that I found an alleviation to my ſorrows by communicating the contents of them to my friends. The reading produced (I do not exaggerate) the moſt tender veneration for your majeſty, and ſome of the hearers were affected even to tears. They requeſted copies of them, certain that the ſame ſenſations which they themſelves felt would be produced in others who ſhould hear them read. Theſe copies I refuſed; I only gave an extract to two or three of them of the moſt intereſting, the moſt moral, and the moſt affecting paſſages in the letters, and ſuch as beſt might conduce to make their auguſt author reſpected and beloved.

Theſe extracts were printed in a journal, without my knowledge, though, to own the truth, I could not repent of ſeeing them printed, by the general effect they produced on every reader. If I be guilty it is of having, if poſſible, increaſed the number of your majeſty's admirers; and I ſcarcely can think that ſuch a

fault will render me criminal in your eyes. At leaſt the intention ought to excuſe the act.

With reſpect to all the other letters which your majeſty has done me the honour to write to me, I can aſſure you I never gave a copy to any perſon on earth, neither of the whole nor in part; nor have I read them to any but a very ſmall number of ſages, to whom every thing which comes from your majeſty is dear and precious. I have not heard that manuſcript copies are circulated in Paris; and, if there be any ſuch, I dare aſſure your majeſty they are factitious and imaginary.

This is not the firſt time that letters which have been ſaid to be addreſſed by your majeſty to me have been printed; I have two or three times publicly given the lie to ſuch forgeries; of which, at length, I was weary, and only requeſted thoſe who read them in future to regard them as impoſitions.

It may happen that ſome mutilated and incorrect phraſes may have got abroad from theſe letters. Of this I am ignorant: but your majeſty may recollect that, when ſome ſuch phraſes were current a few years ago, you ſuſpected they were publiſhed by thoſe who, between Berlin and Paris, are known to open all letters that come by the poſt. This you did me the ho-

nour to inform me of, and, if the fact of which you complain be true, it may originate in the ſame cauſe.

I hope your majeſty is convinced, if, through my zeal, or through my neglect, any extracts from your majeſty's letters are made public, they can be only ſuch as could not offend any perſon, and the ſole effect of which muſt be to make your majeſty more beloved and reſpected by thoſe who, only knowing you were a king, were ignorant that you are a man and a ſage.

Plato took care not to publiſh the letters of the tyrant Dionyſius, for they did not reſemble thoſe of the philoſopher Frederic. Ariſtotle has tranſmitted a letter to poſterity, written to him by Philip, the father of Alexander; which letter does more honour to the memory of Philip than all his victories over the Athenians.

I repeat—Such, ſire, is the exact and pure truth. May it convince and move your majeſty, and reſtore me to that favour which I have not merited to loſe, in my preſent melancholy ſituation, amid the affliction for the loſſes I have ſuffered, which is not weakened. Nothing but this was wanting to complete my misfortunes; and this, ſire, I ſhall want the fortitude to ſurvive! But you will not have the courage ſo profoundly to aggravate my ſufferings.

I am,

I am, with the moſt afflicted heart, but with the moſt tender veneration, &c.

LETTER CLXVII.

From the King.

December 20, 1777.

I SATISFY myſelf with acknowledging the receipt of your letter, and, as mine may be read by all Paris, I ſhall only reply relative to the ſieur Deliſle, of whom you have ſpoken, that there is no place here which will ſuit him, and that I imagine the beſt thing he can do will be to go to Holland, where the trade of book making procures bread for many people of his ſpecies.

On which, &c.

LETTER CLXVIII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, January 30, 1778.

YOUR majeſty perſiſts in thinking me culpable, in deſpite of my apology. Let me

entreat you to indulge me in a few more words, for my juſtification. Never, ſire, never did I ſuffer copies to be taken of the letters which your majeſty has done me the honour to write to me, ſome philoſophic reflections excepted, by which you were pleaſed to endeavour to aſſuage my grief, after the loſs I had ſuffered. Theſe reflections appeared to me a moſt excellent abridgment of morality, for an afflicted philoſopher, and ſuch as were moſt proper to increaſe, as they have done, the number of your majeſty's admirers. My motive was ſo worthy a one, and its general ſucceſs was ſo correſpondent, that I cannot poſſibly repent of it, notwithſtanding your majeſty's diſſatisfaction; though I did not allow myſelf to give the copies in queſtion to more than one or two of my friends, and I certainly never ſhould have ſent them to the preſs without your majeſty's permiſſion.

With reſpect to other things which your majeſty's letters might contain, I have been exceedingly ſcrupulous, nor ever permitted any perſon to copy a ſingle line. I even only read your letters to a very few people, taking care to ſuppreſs whatever might, in the leaſt, be thought to betray your majeſty.

Such, ſire, has been my conduct; but your majeſty

majeſty knows that all letters, and yours eſpecially, are perhaps ten times opened, between Berlin and Paris. Of this you have yourſelf complained, in ſeveral letters which you have done me the honour to write to me; becauſe the openers of letters had, in effect, abuſed their licenſe, and reported even incorrectly their contents. It is not my fault, ſire, that this execrable abuſe exiſts through almoſt all Europe; nor ought I to be made its victim. I defy any man to lay ſuch a proceeding to my charge, and to prove his accuſation.

I therefore hope your majeſty will be pleaſed to credit my aſſertions, and to render more juſtice to my ſentiments, my worth, and my diſcretion.

It is my duty to thank your majeſty for the copy you have been pleaſed to order of ſome lines, from the manuſcript of Froiſſart, which is at Breſlau. This copy is found to be perfect, and anſwerable to the intentions of the new editor.

Your majeſty ſhould by this have received the printed letter, which I have written, on the death of poor madame Geoffrin. She tenderly loved me, becauſe ſhe was herſelf convinced I was capable of love. She was my only remaining female friend, after her whom I had loſt.

I am

I am now left deſolate on earth, and more to be pitied than your majeſty imagines. I need not add to my afflictions that of having diſpleaſed your majeſty, and of having unmeritedly incurred your diſpleaſure. I venture to think you will continue to conſole me, by your letters, and will not envy me this only remaining ſatisfaction.

I take the liberty, here, to add the diſcourſe which I pronounced, ſome days ſince, before the French Academy, at the admiſſion of the ſucceſſor of Greſſet. The public received this diſcourſe with the utmoſt indulgence, both when it was pronounced and when publiſhed; but I ſhall not be entirely ſatisfied with my ſucceſs, unleſs this trifle ſhould be honoured by your majeſty's approbation. I have endeavoured to characteriſe, to the beſt of my abilities, the poetry and the poet; ſo that poets themſelves, who are but little favourable to mathematics, did not appear to me diſſatisfied.

I now conclude my letter, which is much too long for a proſcribed wretch, like me, and for a monarch whom I believe to be more than ever occupied. Though I ſcarcely dare any longer ſpeak of public affairs to your majeſty, I ſtill indulge myſelf in the wiſh that you may not be engaged in a war which, while it increaſes your glory, will injure your repoſe. Of glory you

have

have no more need, but much of health and eaſe.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, and the moſt tender confidence in your bounty, &c.

LETTER CLXIX.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, March 30, 1778.

MY firſt propenſity was to begin my letter by adding a word concerning my affliction and my innocence; but trifles ought to give place to great events, and my heart inclines me to begin with ſpeaking of the glory which your majeſty derives, in the eyes of all Europe, by declaring yourſelf the protector of Germany, and the defender of its princes. I know not, nor do I ſeek to divine, what the conſequences of ſo noble and glorious a ſtep will be, which will make ſo reſpectable an epocha in the life of your majeſty. My wiſhes are confined to your preſervation, health, and happineſs, and that you may be ſucceſsful in the worthy example you at preſent afford to other monarchs.

I now, ſire, for a moment, return to myſelf. I know not whether ſome paſſages from your letters,

letters, which may have given offence, have really been circulated through Paris and Verſailles; but, though theſe copies ſhould not be incorrect and unfaithful, as often happens, they ſtill were not given by me. I had even the circumſpection not to write a word to Voltaire concerning himſelf, from the fear that he ſhould make an improper uſe of ſuch communications; and, ſince he has been here, I have been equally guarded, from the ſame motive. He is now at Paris, univerſally applauded, but very ill. He has given us a new tragedy, which, conſidering his age, is an aſtoniſhing performance.

Your majeſty is, at preſent, ſo occupied by the moſt important affairs that I fear intruding upon your time; I will only ſuffer myſelf to add a word, relative to what you have done me the honour to ſay concerning my letter on madame Geoffrin, that—"Though I have neither night nor morning, I have noon and afternoon for my conſolation *." Alas! ſire, (for I cannot imagine you would, in your humanity, ridicule my preſent ſituation) theſe two parts of the day are more gloomy than the others. My unfortunate digeſtion obliges me

* This letter from the king is omitted; the editors of Berlin beſt know why. T.

to

to pass them alone; nor can I see a few friends, who alleviate without putting an end to my affliction, till toward the evening. Deign, sire, to grant me the most efficacious of all consolation; restore me to your favour, which, I venture to say, I have not deserved to lose, and of the value of which I am more than ever sensible.

I am, with the most profound respect, &c.

LETTER CLXX.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, March 31, 1778.

YOUR majesty has so long accustomed me to receive marks of your benevolence that I venture to take the liberty, at present, to request one more, in favour of a person truly worthy of this distinction, which you will yourself grant, as soon as he shall become known to you. The vicomte d'Houdetot, colonel and lieutenant of the gendarmes, who will have the honour to present this letter to your majesty, is a young officer of distinguished birth, a man of courage and honour, enamoured of his profession, who travels to gain information, and who, certainly, cannot

cannot better accompliſh ſo praiſe-worthy an object than in the excellent ſchool of which you are the inſtitutor, the chief, and the model.

To theſe claims on your majeſty's bounty, the vicomte d'Houdetot adds another, and one which beſt may affect the feeling heart of your majeſty. He is the ſon of a moſt reſpectable mother, a woman of underſtanding, ſenſibility, and virtue; and, I am bold to ſay, worthy herſelf of experiencing your favour in the perſon of her ſon, by the ſentiments of admiration and reſpect with which ſhe is penetrated for your majeſty; ſentiments which ſhe delights to dwell on, as I have frequently been a witneſs, and with which ſhe has unceaſingly inſpired her ſon.

I therefore venture moſt ardently to ſupplicate your majeſty would be pleaſed to permit the vicomte d'Houdetot to approach your perſon, to ſee and liſten to you for a few moments, and eſpecially, under your auſpices, to be a ſpectator of the admirable manœuvres which excite the aſtoniſhment of Europe, and which are themſelves ſo intereſting an object, to a young officer anxious for improvement. He will preſerve an eternal remembrance of the favour done him by your majeſty, ſhould you be pleaſed to grant this requeſt. He will, particularly, never forget the happineſs he will have enjoyed, and

which

which is desired, at this moment, by so many others, of having beheld your majesty at, perhaps, the most brilliant epocha of a reign which had previously been so glorious; at that very remarkable moment in which you, sire, act, in presence of all Europe, a part so worthy of yourself; that of the defender of Germany, and the protector of the Germanic body; the same part by which the great Gustavus Adolphus acquired so much fame, whose successor your majesty is, and whose glory you will efface.

Rumour has announced, with the highest praise, a memorial of great strength and dignity, which your majesty has lately published on the present situation of the empire. We have not yet read a writing so worthy of yourself, here, in France, but we greatly desire to read it, having long been accustomed equally to admire your majesty in what you do, and in what you write.

I am, with the most profound respect, and with sentiments of admiration and gratitude, which I shall bear with me to the grave, &c.

LET-

LETTER CLXXI.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, June, 29, 1778.

YOUR majeſty, no doubt, will neither be aſtoniſhed nor offended at the ſilence in which I have three months remained. I have thought it my duty to reſpect thoſe truly reſpectable occupations which, certainly, at preſent, take up the time of your majeſty, and induce you to act a part ſo worthy of yourſelf in the eyes of all Europe; and for the ſucceſs of which all Europe, and particularly all France, offer up the moſt ardent and ſincere prayers.

An event has paſſed here in which literature is greatly intereſted; M. de Voltaire is dead. I imagine your majeſty muſt have heard of all the follies which have been acted and repeated on this occaſion; the refuſal of the prieſt of the pariſh to inter him, although he had, in writing, declared that he died a catholic, and that, if he had brought any ſcandal on the church, he aſked the church's pardon; of his burial, at the diſtance of thirty leagues from Paris, in a clandeſtine kind of manner, at the abbey of his nephew; of the reproaches and threats by which the unfortunate prior of that abbey has been aſ-

ſaulted,

ſaulted, who defended himſelf in a letter to which his very ſuperiors have judged no reply could be made; of the refuſal given to the French Academy to perform maſs for him, according to cuſtom; and, in fine, of the ſtupid and ridiculous joy of all the fanatics, at his death. Theſe infamous proceedings, collectively, will diſhonour us in the eyes of Europe, and of poſterity; could Europe and poſterity remain ignorant that they are not the work of the nation, but of the diſgraceful part of the nation, who, unfortunately, are in power.

I am penetrated with the moſt lively gratitude, for all the favours which your majeſty intended to grant to the viſcount d'Houdetot, who unfortunately has been unable to profit by them, according to his wiſhes. His wife, ſince his departure, is brought to bed; and the whole family gave the child the name of Frederic, as a mark of gratitude, though your majeſty has rendered this name ſo difficult to bear.

I fear, while renewing the expreſſion of all the ſentiments I owe your majeſty, leſt I ſhould intrude upon moments ſo dear to your fame, and the grand object by which you are occupied, for the good of Germany, Europe, and mankind. When you are more at leiſure, I ſhall do myſelf the honour to write more at length, and give a

free courſe to thoſe expreſſions of admiration, and tender and profound veneration, with which I ſhall all my life, &c.

LETTER CLXXII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, June 30, 1778,

I DID not receive the letter which your majeſty did me the honour to write, on the truly irreparable loſs by which literature is at this moment afflicted, till yeſterday evening, the 29th of June. I did myſelf the honour, that very day, to write a letter to your majeſty, which was ſent away ſome hours before I received yours, and in which I mentioned the death of M. de Voltaire, with ſome particulars that followed. My letter was brief, becauſe of the very important and reſpectable occupations which engage the precious moments of your majeſty, and, on which, at preſent, the attention of all Europe is from intereſt fixed.

Your majeſty requires a circumſtantial account of the death of the great man whom we have had the misfortune to loſe. Being no longer under reſtraint from the fear of intruding on time ſo worthily

worthily employed, I ſhall immediately endeavour to ſatisfy your wiſhes; and, as I foreſee the letter will be long, I begin it to day, June 30th, though it will not depart before the 3d of July, that I may immediately execute the commands of your majeſty.

That you may well underſtand what has paſſed, and judge of all the ſilly things that have been ſaid and done on this gloomy occaſion, it is neceſſary I ſhould date my narrative back. At the beginning of March, M. de Voltaire, who had been at Paris three weeks, had a conſiderable ſpitting of blood, an accident which had never happened to him before in his life. Some days previous to his illneſs, he aſked me, in a confidential converſation, how I adviſed him to act, if, during his ſtay, he ſhould fall ſeriouſly ill. My anſwer was what every prudent man in my place would have made; I ſaid he would do well to act, under ſuch circumſtances, like all the philoſophers by whom he had been preceded; among others, like Fontenelle and Monteſquieu, who had ſubmitted to cuſtom.

Et reçu ce que vous ſavez,
Avec beaucoup de révérence *.

* And received what you wot of, with much reverence.

He highly approved my advice. "I think "ſo too," ſaid he, "for we muſt not be thrown "on the dunghill, where I once ſaw poor Le "Couvreur thrown*." He had, I know not why, much averſion to this mode of burial, which I took care not to oppoſe, being deſirous that, in caſe of misfortune, every thing ſhould be done without trouble, or cauſe of offence. Conſequently, finding himſelf one day more ill than uſual, he bravely determined to do as we had agreed; and, during a morning viſit which I paid him, while he ſpoke to me with much vivacity, and I entreated him to be ſilent, and not fatigue himſelf, he laughing replied— "Speak I muſt, whether I do or do not pleaſe. "Do not you recollect I am to confeſs? This "is the moment, as Henry IV. ſaid, in which I "muſt take the dangerous leap; for which rea- "ſon I have ſent for the abbé Gaultier, of whoſe "arrival I am in expectation."

This abbé Gaultier, ſire, is a poor devil of a prieſt, who, from goodneſs of heart, had voluntarily come to M. de Voltaire, ſome days before his illneſs, and made an offer, in caſe of need, of his clerical ſervices; which M. de Voltaire

* Mlle. le Couvreur was a celebrated actreſs. T.

had

had accepted, becauſe the man appeared to him more moderate and rational than three or four other of the hooded tribe, who, like the abbé Gaultier, knowing no more than he did of M. de Voltaire, came, unſent for, to preach to him like fanatics, and forbode Hell and God's judgments; and whom the old patriarch had the goodneſs not to order to be thrown out of the window.

The abbé Gaultier came, was an hour alone with the patient, and left him ſo well ſatisfied that he immediately determined to go to the pariſh-church, in ſearch of what we call the *Bon Dieu**; to which the patient would not conſent, "becauſe," ſaid he, "I ſpit blood, and "I might, unfortunately, happen to ſpit out "ſomething elſe." In compliance with the requeſt of the abbé, he gave him his profeſſion of faith, written with his own hand, and in which he declared, "his intention was to die in the "catholic religion, in which belief he was born, "hoping the divine mercy would pardon all his "errors;" and added that, "if he had ever "brought ſcandal on the church, he aſked for-"giveneſs of God and her." This laſt article he added at the requeſt of the prieſt, and, as he ſaid, for the ſake of peace.

* The Hoſt. T.

He gave this profeſſion of faith to the abbé Gaultier, in the preſence of his relations, and ſuch of his friends as were in the chamber, by two of whom it was ſigned, as witneſſes. Several of his friends and relations thought, with reaſon, he had extended his complaiſance to the wiſhes of our holy mother-church too far; that he ought to have been contented with a verbal declaration, in the preſence of witneſſes, that he died a catholic; and that nothing more could have been required, ſince thoſe anti-religious works which had been imputed to him he had always diſowned.

Be this as it may, the curate (or pariſh-prieſt) of St. Sulpice, to which pariſh he belonged, a man of little underſtanding, and a bigotted fanatic, came the ſame day to ſee the patient. He ſeemed vexed that he had not rather been ſent for than a ſtreet-corner prieſt. It was a converſion which he had at heart to make himſelf, and which had been impolitely purloined from him by an adventurer. He, however, approved the profeſſion of faith which had been preſented to him, and of this even gave atteſtation by writing.

This, ſire, is all which paſſed at that time. In ſome days, M. de Voltaire was much better, and had ſtrength enough to viſit the academy

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and the theatre on the ſame day. On his arrival at the academy, he found more than two thouſand people aſſembled in the court of the Louvre, who clapped and ſhouted, *vive M. de Voltaire*!* The academicians came to the entrance of the court, to meet him, in a body; gave him the place of honour, deſired him to preſide at the aſſembly, unanimouſly appointed him director, and, in fine, omitted nothing which could indicate their attention and veneration for their illuſtrious aſſociate. We were enraptured by his politeneſs, the charms of his wit, and the various obliging and elegant things he ſaid.

He thence proceeded to the theatre, followed by an innumerable multitude. His reception, when he appeared in the houſe, and during the whole performance, which was his own tragedy of Irene, was a thing unexampled: to be believed it muſt have been ſeen. Enthuſiaſm and ecſtaſy were carried to their utmoſt extent. The actors came into the box in which he was to crown him with laurel, amid the acclamations of the whole audience, who approved with hands and feet, and with the univerſal cry of bravo! Between the play and the after-piece, the buſt of M. de Voltaire was placed upon the ſtage,

* Much the ſame as, Voltaire for ever! T.

and, in like manner, crowned with laurel, at which the public tranſport redoubled.

This apotheoſis it was which particularly irritated the fanatics. An Ex-jeſuit, one of the Lent preachers at Verſailles, had the impudence to exclaim againſt ſuch ſcandalous proceedings, in preſence of the whole court; but the whole court laughed at him, except ſome hypocrites, and idiots, who are as plentiful in this country as in any other.

Unfortunately the apotheoſis excited the indignation of people more to be feared than fanatics, and who felt that neither their places, credit, nor power, would ever acquire them homage ſo flattering, from the nation, which was only rendered to genius. In the whole world, and Paris at this moment will ſay the ſame, I know not, in the whole world, but one man, who, were he in this metropolis, could have divided with M. de Voltaire the admiration and enthuſiaſm of the public. Who this man is I will leave your majeſty to divine.

M. de Voltaire, who daily continued, at the theatres, at the academy, and in the very ſtreets, to receive homage from his fellow citizens, at length, toward the end of April, fell very ſeriouſly ill, by having taken, while he was at his labours, ſeveral cups of coffee, which increaſed the

the ſtrangury to which he was ſubject. To diminiſh the pain he felt, he applied to opiates; but he doubled and trebled the doſe in ſuch a manner that he never recovered his underſtanding, except during ſhort intervals.

I viſited him in this ſituation, and he always knew me; he even uſed ſome expreſſions of friendſhip, but immediately after relapſed into his ſtupor; for he was in a continual ſlumber. He awoke only to complain, and to ſay he was come to die at Paris. The abbé Mignot, his nephew, a member of the grand council, went to the curate of St. Sulpice, who told him that, ſince M. de Voltaire had loſt his recollection, it was uſeleſs for him to viſit him; but that he declared, if M. de Voltaire did not make a public, ſolemn, and moſt circumſtantial reparation for the offence of which he had been the cauſe, he could not in conſcience bury him in conſecrated ground. In vain did the nephew reply that his uncle, when in the full poſſeſſion of his faculties, had made his profeſſion of faith, the authenticity of which the curate himſelf had acknowledged; that he had always diſowned the works which had been imputed to him; yet, that he had complied ſo far, with the miniſters of the church, as to declare that, if he had given any cauſe of offence, he aſked pardon. The curate anſwered,

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this was not ſufficient; M. de Voltaire was notoriouſly known to be the declared enemy of religion, and he could not, without committing himſelf with the clergy and the archbiſhop, grant him chriſtian burial. The abbé Mignot threatened to apply to the parliament for juſtice, which he ſaid he hoped to obtain, having ſuch authentic proofs in his poſſeſſion. The curate, conſcious of ſupport, replied, he muſt act as he thought proper.

All the friends of M. de Voltaire were of opinion that his family ought to apply to the laws; and it was loudly affirmed that the magiſtrates, who had ſo often cauſed the ſacraments and chriſtian burial to be granted to Janſeniſts, could not, in common juſtice, refuſe the ſame favour to M. de Voltaire, after the declaration he had made. But his family, in ſpite of theſe remonſtrances, ſtood in awe of the parliament, the members of which had no affection for M. de Voltaire, becauſe of the epigrams to be found in his works againſt that body, which, in this caſe, would not have been favourable to his cauſe. The public thought otherwiſe; and affirmed the parliament muſt, under ſuch circumſtances, have ceded to the general voice in their own deſpite; and there were, beſide, a great number of magiſtrates, eſpecially among the

youthful claſs, and ſome even of the aged, who ſeemed to be very well diſpoſed. Notwithſtanding all theſe reaſons, the fears of his relations prevailed; and they remained in a ſtate of inaction, which the public has very much diſapproved.

On Saturday, May 30, the day of his deceaſe, the abbé Gaultier once more offered his ſervices, ſome hours before the fatal moment, in a letter he wrote to the abbé Mignot. The latter immediately ſent in ſearch of the abbé Gaultier, and the curate of St. Sulpice, who came together. The curate approached the dying man, and pronounced the name of Jeſus Chriſt, at which M. de Voltaire, who continued in a doſing ſtate, opened his eyes, and made a motion with his hand, as if to bid the curate begone, ſaying—"Let me die in peace." The curate, more moderate and rational, on this occaſion, than was in character for him to be, turned to the perſons preſent, and ſaid—"You "ſee, gentlemen, he is not in his ſenſes;" though the reverſe, at this moment, was the fact; but, as you may well imagine, ſire, every perſon took care not to contradict the curate.

The man under the hood then retired, and, by what he ſaid to the family, he was weak enough to unmaſk himſelf, and clearly to prove that his whole conduct was an act of vanity.

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He told them they had acted improperly in ſending for the abbé Gaultier, who had ſpoiled every thing; that they ſhould have addreſſed themſelves to him alone, for the patient was one of his flock; that they ſhould have left him *in private* with the dying man, and then *he would have taken care of every thing*.

He nevertheleſs perſiſted in refuſing chriſtian burial, and would only give his conſent in writing that M. de Voltaire might be removed. Had the profeſſion of faith been given to the curate, he would certainly have been more flexible. He would have regarded it as a trophy of victory, gained by him over the patriarch of unbelievers; but, as this profeſſion had been given to a poor hackney parſon, the archbiſhop and the curate rather choſe to affirm it was ironical, than to leave the honour of ſuch a victory to ſuch a prieſt.

M. de Voltaire expired at eleven of the clock in the evening, after uttering a few more words with difficulty, and after having ſhewn, during his ſickneſs, as much tranquillity of mind as his ſituation would permit, though he ſeemed to regret life. I viſited him on the eve of his death, and, after ſome expreſſions of friendſhip to him, he replied by ſqueezing my hand, and ſaying—"You are my conſolation."—I was ſo much affected

fected to ſee him thus, and he had ſo much difficulty to expreſs himſelf, even in monoſyllables, that I was unable longer to continue a ſpectator of ſuch a ſcene. The image of this great man, dying, excited emotions ſo ſtrong, and fixed itſelf ſo powerfully on my imagination, that it never can be effaced. It gave birth to the moſt melancholy reflections on the non-entity of life and fame, and the miſery of man.

Twenty-four hours after his death, he was embalmed, put into a carriage, wrapped in a morning-gown, and carried, by the abbé Mignot, and ſome other relations, to the abbey of Scellières, thirty leagues from Paris, of which the abbé Mignot is the incumbent. Here, on Tueſday, the ſecond of June, he was interred, with great ceremony, amid a concourſe of people, aſſembled from all the country round. The prior of the abbey, a good benedictine monk, who knew nothing of what had paſſed at Paris, made not the leaſt difficulty of performing the ceremony, after having ſeen the proofs which were preſented by the abbé Mignot.

Twenty-four hours after, on Wedneſday the third, the prior received a letter from the biſhop of Troyes, in whoſe dioceſe the abbey of Scellières is ſituated, forbidding him to inhume the body, if the rites of burial had not yet been performed.

formed. The letter of the prior to the biſhop, in reply, was very firm, and very reſpectful. He ſtated the reaſons of his conduct, which he ſo well juſtified that, it is affirmed, the prelate himſelf allowed no objection could be made. It ſeems, the biſhop, who is really a good man, but governed by a devout and bigotted ſiſter, and urged to act by the archbiſhop of Paris, had, contrary to his own inclination, written to the prior of Scellières; and had taken meaſures that his letter ſhould arrive after the interment. The poor prior, who was threatened with ruin, repaired to Paris, and gave his reaſons; and it is hoped he will be left in peace. I have been aſſured, and the thing is very poſſible, that the archbiſhop of Paris had conſulted a learned caſuiſt, to know whether the body of Voltaire might not be taken up; and that the canoniſt replied they muſt beware of ſuch an act, for nothing could be more contrary to rule.

Let not your majeſty, however, for the honour of the nation imagine that all the devout, or even all the biſhops, approve the abominable manner in which this great man has been treated. Among other prelates whom I might mention, the archbiſhop of Lyons, brother to that Montazet who ſerved in the Auſtrian army during the laſt war, a man who does not fear being

accuſed

accuſed of too much lenity, ſince he is ſuppoſed to be a Janſeniſt, has openly affirmed he could not comprehend the reaſon of the conduct of the curate of St. Sulpice and the archbiſhop of Paris; that nothing was more contrary to the laws and the conſtant uſage of the church; and that burial ought not to be refuſed, except to thoſe who were notoriouſly excommunicated, and who, when dying, gave formal ſigns of impiety, which M. de Voltaire had not done. Several curates of Paris think the ſame, and would certainly have interred him, in deſpite of the archbiſhop, had he died in any one of their pariſhes. The curate of St. Etienne du Mont, among others, has publicly aſſerted that he would have buried him in his church, between Racine and Paſcal, who there lie entombed. In fine, all the truly religious, that is to ſay, thoſe who do not make devotion a party matter, and a pretext for acting with importance, and becoming the ſubjects of public remark, unanimouſly blame the fanaticiſm of the curate and the archbiſhop.

I ſpeak not of the remainder of the nation, for I cannot expreſs to your majeſty the indignation that has been excited by all theſe tranſactions; and it would be very unjuſt to render men reſponſible for, who certainly would have prevented,

prevented, or repreſſed, ſuch infamous proceedings, had they had the power. The miniſtry, who have permitted an abomination ſo diſhonourable to France, and have ſuffered the prieſts on this occaſion to act as they thought proper, pay no attention to the influence and power which have been given the clergy by this ſtep; who imagine they are hereafter at liberty to grant or to refuſe burial as they pleaſe.

The French Academy has not yet been able to obtain, in favour of M. de Voltaire, the maſs which it is cuſtomary to perform, on the loſs of any one of its members; nor, in deſpite of its ſolicitations, will it probably obtain this favour; the refuſal of which is a new outrage committed on the memory of the great man whom we regret. Men of letters, however, all do him ſo much juſtice that no man has yet dared to offer himſelf as his ſucceſſor; and there is every reaſon to believe no election will ſuddenly take place; it ought never, indeed; and, if my opinion be followed, the place will be left vacant.

This, ſire, is the relation which you have done me the honour to demand. Though I have only obeyed your orders, I fear leſt I ſhould have abuſed the permiſſion you have granted me, fully to unboſom myſelf on this ſorrowful occaſion, and the revolting conſequences paſt

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and preſent. Would you believe that the Journaliſts have all been ſeverely forbidden to ſpeak a ſingle word, in honour of M. de Voltaire! That they are not even permitted to mention his name! That the players have been prohibited, during almoſt a month, from acting any of his pieces; and that this prohibition is but juſt taken off!

I ſhould have much to ſay on the ſubject, were it not prudent to keep ſilence. The letter with which your majeſty has honoured me was neceſſary to my heart, to alleviate the grief and indignation into which I am plunged. Were I twenty years younger, I would unregretted forſake a country in which genius is treated with ſo much indignity, both alive and dead; but I am ſixty years of age, and too old to change my lodging. I, however, conſole myſelf by the intereſt which your majeſty is pleaſed to take in the loſs which literature, philoſophy, France, and Europe itſelf have ſuffered; of which I ſhall inform all who are worthy to hear and capable of feeling it, and which I will venture to ſay M. de Voltaire deſerved, not only becauſe of his uncommon genius, but of his admiration of your majeſty. You, ſire, were often the ſubject of our diſcourſe. He loved and honoured your perſon, and regarded you as the reſource and

hope of truth and reaſon. It would, ſire, be an act worthy of yourſelf were you to render him, in your capital, and your academy, thoſe honours which his country have refuſed. It is for the greateſt king in Europe, a king who is formed to become an example to others, to honour the memory of this great man by ſome ſolemn act, which will conſole philoſophy, put France to the bluſh, and confound fanaticiſm.

You have at preſent intereſts too great to treat of for me to intrude upon your time, concerning other ſubjects; but your majeſty will live, and will no doubt ſoon enjoy ſome intervals of repoſe, when I ſhall take the liberty again to ſpeak of our common loſs, of the intereſt you were pleaſed to take in it, and of what you ſhall think proper to do, in honour of that genius that is now no more.

I conclude my letter by preſenting, with increaſing ardour, all my wiſhes in your majeſty's favour, and all thoſe which the French nation, at this time, make for you, your preſervation, your happineſs, and your glory, and that you may remain the arbitrator and ſaviour of Germany. Never was your majeſty more reſpectable, or more dear to Europe.

Theſe ſentiments are deeply engraven on my heart, as are the eternal gratitude, the profound admira-

admiration, and the tender veneration, with which I ſhall, to my laſt ſigh, &c.

P. S. I have been ſo intent on the ſubject of M. de Voltaire, in my letter, that I had almoſt forgotten to notice another loſs, which your majeſty has lately ſuffered, in the perſon of the reſpectable lord marſhal, whoſe virtues your majeſty honoured, and who well merited the regret you feel, from the tender veneration in which he held you. We are told he died with the moſt philoſophic tranquillity, at which I am not ſurpriſed. He honoured me with his friendſhip, the worth of which I felt. I daily loſe ſome friend or other, and new friendſhips are not made at my age; but your majeſty lives, and your life induces me to ſupport my own.

I forgot to inform your majeſty that M. de Voltaire, at one of the viſits paid him by his curate, gave twenty-five guineas for the poor of the pariſh, which the prieſt, with great complaiſance accepted, but refuſed to inter him, notwithſtanding. One might ſay to him, as *Chicaneau** does to the porter of his judge, who receives the purſe of the pleader, and ſhuts the door in his face—"Nay, then, give me back my money."

* A character in *Les Plaideurs*, or, *The Pleaders*, a comedy, by Racine. T.

But the church is like the lion's den in the fable —" All go in, but none come out."

I likewiſe forgot to inform your majeſty that a curate of Paris, whoſe name I have not learned, being aſked in what manner he would have behaved, had M. de Voltaire died in his pariſh, replied,—" I would have ſolemnly interred him, " and have written an epitaph for him, to which " I would have added his profeſſion of faith."— This would have been acting like a man of ſenſe, as the curate no doubt is. The epitaph would have remained a trophy for the church, and a proof of the recantation, real or apparent, of the errors of M. de Voltaire, to poſterity. It is inconceivable that the curate of St. Sulpice and the archbiſhop did not think thus, and did not perceive the advantages they might have drawn from this profeſſion of faith, inſtead of confeſſing themſelves vanquiſhed, and treated ironically, by regarding it as the act of deriſion. But, God be thanked, the enemies of reaſon are as fooliſh as they are fanatical. They would be too formidable did they add underſtanding to the influence which they have acquired over folly. They have, however, had the wit to perſuade moſt kings that they are the ſupport of royal authority, and have artfully profited by the abſurdity

ſurdity of the author of the *Syſteme de la Nature*, by whom this doctrine has been ſtupidly advanced. Had this bad philoſopher read eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, he would have ſeen that prieſts, far from being the ſupport of kings, have, in all ages, been their enemies; that it was not their fault that the Bourbons were not deprived of the throne which was legitimately theirs; and that, when they tell kings they derive power from God, it is not that they mean to ſubmit to that power, but, on the contrary, to ſubject kings to their own, ſince they pretend they are God's earthly repreſentatives.

II. P. S. I have again peruſed my own, and again read your majeſty's letter for the twentieth time, which will not be the laſt, and which is well worthy of being a part of the epitaph of Voltaire, inſtead of his profeſſion of faith. I perceive, a little too late, I have not noticed a paſſage in that excellent letter, in which your majeſty ſays—"Perhaps the old patriarch would "ſtill have been alive, had he returned to Fer-"ney." Alas! Sire, I think the ſame, and am perſuaded that the fatiguing and agitated life he led, at Paris, conſiderably ſhortened his days. I was ſtrongly of opinion he ought to have returned to Ferney, at the beginning of the fine weather, there peaceably to have enjoyed the

homage that had been paid him at Paris. But his niece, who was weary of Ferney, perſuaded him to the contrary; and ſeveral of his friends were of the ſame opinion, fearing that, ſhould he ever return to his retreat, the prieſts would obtain an order to oblige him there to remain. They had endeavoured to bring him into trouble, on his return to Paris, by aſſerting it was without permiſſion; but it was demonſtrated that he never was forbidden to return, and they prudently thought proper to ſuffer him to enjoy his fame in peace.

For my own part, when I heard of the almoſt ſudden project he had formed to come to Paris, and that he was actually on the road, I was greatly afflicted; not doubting but that he came thither to ſeek perſecution and death. I was, to my great ſatisfaction, deceived in the firſt conjecture, and his ſplendid and ſolemn apotheoſis conſoled me for his journey; but, unfortunately, my forebodings were too true, relative to the fatal and irreparable conſequence of this imprudent and haſty ſtep. His phyſician has ſaid that, had he remained at Ferney, he might have lived ten years longer. In effect, the vital principle was ſo ſtrong in him that his illneſs was long, and painful. At eighty-four, he had all the fire of youth; and, when the abbé Deliſle

read

read a tranſlation in verſe to him, of one of the epiſtles of Pope, M. de Voltaire aſtoniſhed and enchanted us all, by his preſence of mind and memory, recollecting at each French verſe the correſponding line from Pope, though perhaps it was thirty years ſince he had read the poem. His tragedy of Irene is neither equal to Zaire nor Mahomet; but it is much ſuperior to any modern tragedy. I am told your majeſty has requeſted a copy from his relations, who no doubt will take a pleaſure, and think it a duty, to procure you one. You will find exceedingly fine lines in this piece, worthy of the author's beſt days; ſome good ſcenes, and the character of a father which is excellently written. When the author fell ill, he intended to have committed it to the preſs, and to have dedicated it to the academy.

I once again aſk a thouſand pardons of your majeſty, for having thus abuſed your time and patience, by this enormous letter, or rather volume. You will not read it, if, as I ſuſpect, you have ſomething better to do. You will throw ſuch idle prattling into the fire, if as I fear ſuch prattling ſhould weary you; but I ſhould prefer this danger to that of not affording you ſuch a feeble proof of my zeal, by executing your commands, and of the pleaſure I take in every thing

which I think can be agreeable to your majeſty. Thus prediſpoſed, I entreat you to be pleaſed to accept this letter, at the end of which I once more take the liberty to renew all the ſentiments of gratitude, admiration, and profound reſpect, with which I ſhall, during life, &c.

While folding my letter, I am told that a very able artiſt has made a ſketch, in *terra cotta*, which perfectly reſembles the man whoſe memory we regret. Should your majeſty wiſh to have one in marble, I will give orders to the artiſt.

Paris, July 3.

LETTER CLXXIII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE,

Paris, Auguſt 16; the anniverſary of the Battle of Lignitz.

THE two laſt letters, with which your majeſty has honoured me, dated the 22d and 23d of July*, arrived only the day before

* The letters here referred to, and various others mentioned by D'Alembert, ſince the offence taken by the king, in Letter CLXIV. are omitted; perhaps purpoſely, by the editors of Berlin, perhaps becauſe they were not to be found. T.

yeſterday,

yeſterday, and have been three weeks on their route. I loſe not a moment to anſwer the queſtions your majeſty has been pleaſed to aſk, on the ſubject of the great man whom we have loſt.

I do not believe he uttered the bon mot, to the marſhal de Richelieu, which is attributed to him—"Ah! brother Cain, thou haſt ſlain me!" I was exceedingly aſſiduous in my viſits, during his illneſs; I ſeveral times met the marſhal at his houſe, but I never heard this expreſſion; nor did any of his family and friends, to their knowledge. I own it is a pleaſant one, very like ſuch as he often ſpoke, and that the marſhal is ſtill more like brother Cain. But apparently it was the invention of ſome perſon who believed the patriarch had been poiſoned, by the opium which had been given him by the marſhal, which is not true. Opium had really been given, but the bottle was broken, by the careleſſneſs of the ſervants, and none of it taken.

Some days before his illneſs, he certainly drank much coffee, that he might work with greater aſſiduity, on the various ſubjects on which he employed himſelf, among which was the correction of his tragedy. He heated his blood,

blood, loſt his ſleep, ſuffered much from his ſtrangury, and to alleviate theſe feelings ſwallowed opium in exceſs, which he ſent for himſelf, and which probably ended his life.

When he fell ill, I know that he was at work on the prophecies of Daniel, but I know not how far he had proceeded. I am alſo certain that, at the requiſition of the empreſs of Ruſſia, he had begun and written ſome pages of her hiſtory.

His relations have agreed with a foreign bookſeller for his manuſcripts; but, as they are all ſealed up at Ferney, there is no knowing their number, which is ſuſpected to be ſmall, for he ſent his works to the preſs as ſoon as they were written. He loved to enjoy, and not idly to bury his talent.

The empreſs of Ruſſia has bought his library, which conſiſts of ten thouſand volumes, in a great number of which there are ſaid to be notes, written by his own hand. The ſovereign propoſes to place this library in a ſmall temple, which ſhe means to build for that purpoſe, and in the centre of which ſhe will erect a monument to his honour.

The monument, ſire, will not be equal to the eulogium which your majeſty intends to write, on

on that great man, and which will bring a fine line written by himſelf to recollection,

Le grand Condé pleurant au vers du grand Corneille.*

From this eulogium, ſire, others will ſpring, which will be unequal to the model imitated. Men of letters, following you, will but caſt in the widow's mite.

The French academy has not yet thought of chooſing a ſucceſſor to M. de Voltaire. It is too much embarraſſed at preſent by the ſubject, which will be delayed as long as poſſible. It is vexatious to recollect that the ſucceſſor of Voltaire muſt be welcomed by a prieſt, who was director at the time this great man died. His fellow members will exert themſelves to ſay all that the hooded gentleman ſhall omit to ſay. Wherefore ſhould their hands and tongues be tied? We continually wiſh a maſs ſhould be ſaid for him, but have little hope of obtaining our wiſhes. We may each of us parody the line from an opera, and ſay—

Ah, j'attendrai long-temps, la meſſe eſt loin encore†!

I know not whether I have had the honour to inform you that a very able artiſt of this country,

* The great Condé weeping at the verſe of the great Corneille.

† Still muſt I wait, for far off is the *maſs*.

named

named Houdon, already known by ſeveral fine works, has executed a magnificent buſt of the patriarch, perfectly reſembling him, in *terra cotta*, till marble ſhall come *. It will be worthy to find a place in the cabinet of your majeſty, and of being beſtowed on the academy of Berlin. The following four excellent lines have been written on Voltaire.

Celui que, dans Athène, eût adoré la Grèce,
Que, dans Rome, à ſa table, Auguſte eût fait aſſeoir,
Nos Céſars d'aujourd'hui n'ont pas voulu le voir ;
Et monſieur de Beaumont lui refuſe une meſſe †.

This monſieur de Beaumont is the worthy fanatic archbiſhop whom Paris has the good fortune to poſſeſs.

My deſire to anſwer your majeſty's queſtions has prevented me from dwelling on the ardent prayers of all France for your proſperity, on the glory by which you are continually crowned, on the example you afford to other ſovereigns, and on all the ſublime qualities which, for this laſt ſix months, you have diſplayed, as negotia-

* D'Alembert means till ſome one ſhall be at the expence of a marble buſt. T.

† The man whom at Athens Greece would have adored, who at Rome would have been the gueſt of Auguſtus, our modern Cæſars have refuſed to ſee; nor would monſieur Beaumont grant him a maſs.

tor,

tor, warrior, and king. May you long continue to give our modern Cæſars ſimilar leſſons!

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, the moſt tender veneration, &c.

LETTER CLXXIV.

From the King.

Undated.

I PROFIT by the departure of colonel Grimm, who is in the Ruſſian ſervice, but on his return to France, to ſend you a ſhort Eſſay on Government. I have taken off but ſix copies, one of which I ſubmit to your cenſure. The ſubject is itſelf of great extent. I have contracted it becauſe it is better to excite ideas in the mind of the reader than to overwhelm him by a repetition of known principles, as is ſo frequently the practice. Should the author merit the approbation of Anaxagoras, his ambition will be fully gratified. The bearer will tell you the reſt. May Anaxagoras long be preſerved! May his peace of mind completely cicatrize the wounds of his heart; and may his magnanimity, riſing ſuperior to every adverſe ſtroke of fate,

fate, enable him to enjoy the happy apathy of the ſtoics!

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CLXXV.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, October 9, 1778.

THE kind expreſſions and conſolatory ſentiments of your majeſty, in behalf of my deceaſed illuſtrious friend, and of your love for talents and genius, I have received with the warmeſt gratitude. They are equally honourable to the memory of this great man and to letters. I wiſh all the learned in Europe were to read what your majeſty has been pleaſed to write to me, on this ſubject, calculated as your letter is to encourage and conſole thoſe who ſeek, like you, but with much inferior abilities, to allay, by meditation and ſtudy, the ills of life, the infirmities of human nature, and the misfortunes occaſioned by perſecution and calumny. I moſt impatiently wait the immortal monument * which

* Meaning the eulogium which the king intended to write.

your majeſty propoſes to erect to the glory of him for whom we weep. The French academy has juſt paid him ſuch honours as never were paid before. Agreeable to the propoſition I made, and which was accepted with applauſe by all my fellow members, the ſubject for the prize poem of the enſuing year is to be the eulogium of M. de Voltaire; and, that the prize may be more conſiderable, I have requeſted the academy to accept the ſum of ſix hundred livres (five and twenty pounds ſterling) which will double the prize, and which I give like the widow's mite. I have farther given the academy a very fine buſt of M. de Voltaire, the reſemblance of which is very great, and the only one we yet have in the hall in which we aſſemble. The buſt is indeed but *terra cotta*, for I am not rich enough to beſtow one in marble; but I had the pleaſure to ſee it placed in the hall, at the public ſitting of the 25th of Auguſt, and honoured by the applauſes and tears of the whole aſſembly.

At this meeting I read an eulogium on Crebillon, in which I found ſeveral occaſions to ſpeak of his illuſtrious vanquiſher, never failing to do juſtice to the vanquiſhed. The public appeared to be ſatisfied with the tranſactions of this meeting, and I hope the prize propoſed will be approved

proved of by your majeſty. We ſhall not receive the pieces before next Auguſt, nor will the poetry then ſent be equal to your proſe. I wiſh earneſtly to ſee the cloſe of the campaign, which, as I am informed by letter, is very fatiguing to your majeſty. I pray ſtill more earneſtly to ſee an end to the war, which you could not avoid, and the motive for undertaking which covers you with glory. May the approaching winter inſpire your enemies with more reaſonable and more pacific propenſities!

M. de Catt will ſend your majeſty an eulogium on La Motte, which I have been aſked to write for a journal, and which I believe contains ſound reflections, on the writings of that author. I ſhall be highly flattered, ſhould this morſel merit your majeſty's ſuffrage.

You have received, or will ſoon receive, a very learned medical treatiſe, the author of which, M. Barthès, has entreated me to lay it at your majeſty's feet, and to requeſt the title of academician of Berlin, of which, by his talents and his labours, he is worthy.

M. de Rougemont is in pain, leſt your majeſty ſhould not have received the laſt letter he had the honour to write, and requeſts your majeſty would kindly be pleaſed to honour him with a ſhort anſwer. He is a very honeſt man,

very

very much attached to your majeſty, and very worthy of your favours.

I ſhall not detain your majeſty, by a relation of all the follies which are acted, ſaid, and read, or rather not read, in the city I inhabit. I ſhall only inform you that there are men vile enough, and unfortunately for them in great numbers, loudly to exclaim againſt the ſubject of the prize propoſed by the academy; and that the curates of Paris wiſhed to preſent a petition, to government, on the ſubject; but ſilence has been impoſed upon them, by adminiſtration.

I am, with the moſt lively gratitude, and moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER CLXXVI.

From the King.

Undated.

I HERE ſend you the eulogium on Voltaire, half minuted down in the camp, and half corrected in winter quarters. I fear the French Academy will criticiſe the ſtyle. But how is it poſſible to ſpeak the language of the Gauls, in all its purity, in Bohemia? I have done my beſt; the work is not worthy of the man it means to

celebrate, but I have profited by my liberty, and have publicly declaimed that at Berlin which few dare whiſper in Paris. In this the whole merit of the work conſiſts. Your eulogium on La Motte is no doubt ſuperior to my ſcribbling, except that my ſubject is richer than yours.

M. Rougemont muſt already have been paid the laſt penny to which he has any claim. With reſpect to the war we are now making, I know not very well what to ſay. I conſider myſelf as an inſtrument in the hands of fate, employed in the chain of cauſes, but as an inſtrument that knows neither the purpoſe nor the reſult of the operations into which he is obliged to enter. This is a ſincere confeſſion, ſuch as politicians and generals rarely make, but very conformable to the turn which the plans of ſo many other ſtateſmen, my predeceſſors, have taken, and the cataſtrophe of which, as hiſtory informs us, has been exceedingly different from the original projects they had conceived. However ponderous the burthen of war may be, for my old age, I will bear it cheerfully, provided I can but conſolidate the future peace and tranquillity of Germany, by my labours. The mind muſt be rouſed to oppoſe the tyrannical principles of an arbitrary government, and curb the unmeaſured ambition which knows no limits,

except

except thoſe of a power ſufficient to oppoſe its progreſs. We muſt therefore fight; when and how often time muſt tell. This is the language of a news-writer, which may be variouſly applied; but, happen what will, I pray God take you to &c.*

LETTER CLXXVII.

From the King.

January 29, 1779.

I HAVE been much aſtoniſhed that a philoſopher, who buſies himſelf with things, ſhould deſire me, who only arrange words, to ſend him ſyllables meaſured by the foot, and perhaps even falſely meaſured. Mallebranche deſpiſed poetry; Newton I believe held it in little eſteem; and Copernicus held the ephemerides of Ptolemy in greater eſtimation than the Iliad and Æneid. What impreſſion can fiction make on a mind in love with truth? But ſuch a mind cannot always be kept on the full ſtretch. After great efforts relaxation muſt have its turn. Be-

* This letter is erroneouſly numbered and placed in the Berlin and Baſil editions; in the latter it is number CLXXV. T.

ſide, thoſe who have made ſome ſtay at Ferney may be ſuppoſed to be reconciled to poetry.

Thus did I reaſon; reflection followed, and I ſaid to myſelf—"Didſt thou write verſe like "Voltaire, thou mighteſt boldly ſend thy poetry "even to Diagoras; but thine are the abortions "of a feeble imagination, and of one ignorant "of the language of the Gauls."

I ſtopped, was undecided, nay diſcouraged. A moment after, I reflected on the manner in which thoſe who act what are called great parts are managed, and thus continued—"We are "treated like children. When we ſcarcely liſp, "we are told our eloquence equals that of Ci-"cero. If we can place a rhyme at the end of "a few ſyllables, the extent of our genius is aſto-"niſhing; and, if we can but ſet one foot be-"fore the other, we are more active than rope-"dancers. Be gone then, Chineſe epiſtle, in "ſearch of Diagoras, and collect praiſes for thy "author." On which, off went the epiſtle, and will be remitted to you.

I expect you will judge of it as the defunct abbé Trublai did of a ſermon, of which his opinion was aſked. "I did not," ſaid he, "hear "a word of mathematics in the whole diſcourſe." Should the verſes weary you, remember you have to thank yourſelf, for have them you would.

I am

I am ſtill more aſtoniſhed at the propoſition you make, that I ſhould put a certain dream in rhyme *. To do this would be very difficult; and, as it was but a ſally of the imagination, it is to be feared that it would not preſerve the ſame rapidity in verſe as in proſe. Rhyme is a very terrible thing, and the beſt poets are obliged to have recourſe to lame and ſuperfluous lines, which they conceal as well as they can, but which fail not to render a work more tedious than it would be in proſe †. Beſide I hear that at preſent they write tragedies at Paris without rhyme, and that poetry is in danger of being proſcribed. I therefore think it would be better to put my verſe in proſe than my proſe in verſe; at leaſt unleſs, by an edict from your new miniſters, poetry ſhould be preſerved in its ancient municipal rights.

I ſuppoſe you have by this received a bundle of metaphyſical wrangling, from which you will not learn much. But what can be learned of a ſcience the interpreters of which are vague and unintelligible words? Of metaphyſics it may be ſaid

* This letter is at ſo great a diſtance from its proper place that the error in the date was not ſoon enough perceived. It ought to follow letter LXXI. and to be dated 1771. T.

† The very reverſe of this is the characteriſtic of good poetry. T.

that it was created purpoſely to combat monſters. But the various explanations of the enigmas of nature do not affect our good humour, and things proceed in their accuſtomed train. You mention the teleſcopes of *** †, and I ſuppoſe the calculations according to which they are conſtructed are admirable; but the fact is I wiſhed to make uſe of them but could not ſee through them.

I judge, from the ſtyle of your letter, that your health is recovered, and that the journey has not been ineffectual. Continue in good health, and reſt perſuaded of the part I take in whatever relates to you.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CLXXVIII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, April 30, 1779.

THE baron von Goltz has been pleaſed to undertake to remit to your majeſty a feeble monument, which I have lately erected to the memory of the virtuous and reſpectable lord

† Of Beguelin, as is evident from the letters of D'Alembert. T.

marſhal.

marſhal *. I ſhall be highly flattered, ſhould the eulogium obtain the ſuffrage of your majeſty. I have there endeavoured to paint with truth the worthy lord who is the ſubject of it; and I ſhall at leaſt have the ſatisfaction, if not to ſucceed, to have expreſſed the ſentiments of reſpect, and admiration, with which I ſo long have been penetrated, for the philoſophic hero who honoured this true ſage with his friendſhip. I know not whether your majeſty have received the volume of academic eulogiums, which I three months ſince addreſſed to M. de Catt. I have had no news of its arrival; though, as ſoon as it came from the preſs, I did not loſe a moment to ſend the volume to your majeſty. I have endeavoured in them to eſtimate and depict the talents of the men of whom I had to ſpeak; and to impart as much variety as I was able, to what related to their characters and genius. The work has been received favourably enough; but the applauſe of others is nothing to me, ſhould I not have the happineſs to obtain that of your majeſty.

* To call writing an eulogium erecting a monument is, or is very like, a Galliciſm; but the metaphor in the original is here, and in ſome other places, ſo poſitive as not with propriety to be avoided. In the ſtyle of the poet, indeed, it is far from a blemiſh in Engliſh. T.

When I ſent the eulogium on the lord marſhal, I had the honour to write a ſhort letter, at a time that I was ill of a fever and ſcarcely could hold a pen. I am at preſent better, though ſtill feeble. I have long wiſhed for the arrival of the hour in which I might venture to congratulate your majeſty, on the concluſion of peace. The public papers have often affirmed this great affair would ſoon be brought to a period, yet it does not appear yet to be finiſhed; but, from what I hear, I believe it to be ſufficiently advanced no longer to doubt that Germany will at length enjoy a happineſs ſo great. For this ſhe will be wholly indebted to your majeſty, whoſe fame is now more than ever great. What a life and what a reign! Such is the unanimous exclamation of Europe. Never had the moſt beautiful drama a more beautiful fifth act! May this fifth act ſtill continue many years! This I hope as much as I wiſh it, for the good of Europe, the example of kings, the felicity of Germany, and the honour of philoſophy and letters. They have more than ever need of a chief and a protector like you; others they have none to hope. Do but live, ſire, and you are ſufficient.

Your majeſty has rendered an honour to the manes of Voltaire which effaces all they have received. I take the liberty to ſend you a ſhort

diſcourſe

diſcourſe, which I pronounced before the academicians, on the day of the reception of his ſucceſſor. At the bottom of the tenth page, your majeſty will perceive I have obliquely hinted, which hint was well underſtood by my audience, at the refuſal of the prieſts to bury Voltaire, and Moliere, in what we call holy ground; and, though this honour was finally granted them, it was granted with a tolerably ill grace.

I know not whether I have had the honour to inform your majeſty that a very able ſtatuary of the academy, named Houdon, has made a buſt of Voltaire, the execution and reſemblance of which are perfect. Should your majeſty deſire to have this buſt, let me entreat you to give me your orders, which it ſhall be my duty to execute with equal zeal and promptitude.

Receive, ſire, with your uſual bounty, the aſſurance of the ſincere and profound ſentiments with which I am devoted to your majeſty; the lively gratitude which I owe you, the admiration with which I am penetrated, and the tender veneration with which I ſhall, to my laſt ſigh, remain, &c.

LET-

LETTER CLXXIX.

From the King.

June 6, 1779.

I HAVE received your two letters, with an eulogium on ſome academicians, and the ſhort work which you have conſecrated to the memory of the lord marſhal, for which I thank you. I have not had time to read the whole, becauſe I am but juſt arrived. My mind, ſtill ſullied by the mingled puddle of politics and finance, muſt be purified, by lawful ablution, in the waters of Hippocrene, previous to preſenting itſelf at the court of Apollo, before the nine muſes, or to meditate on works like yours. Grant me but this ſhort delay, and I will then enter more fully into the ſubject than I can at preſent.

My poor brain has been agitated by ſtorms, during fourteen months, which have effaced all traces of the arts, and deranged my ideas by a multitude of regulations, ſpeculations, negotiations, and affairs of every kind, with which I have of neceſſity been occupied. The impetuous Boreas and the raging Auſter have been calmed, by a ſtroke from the trident of the French Neptune, and of his ſage miniſtry; but, though

though the waves of my long-agitated mind no longer riſe to the clouds, the ſurface of the waters is and will continue to be diſturbed, till it ſhall be allayed by a perfect calm. Here is a ſimile which would read much better in an ode than in a letter; but I know not what to do, my dear geometrician; you muſt be obliged to digeſt this common-place compariſon, becauſe I know not, at preſent, what better to ſubſtitute. I grow ſo old, and am ſo worn, that I am no longer good for any one thing on earth. Each man is not a Fontenelle, a Voltaire, nor even equal to the good deceaſed lord marſhal, who preſerved his powers and vivacity of mind in a much more advanced age than that of Condé, and Marlborough, who doated on the brink of the grave. I ſhall ſoon doat like them, and like Swift, whom his ſervants ſhewed for money. Don Joſeph will ſay he well deſerved his fate.

Joſeph! Joſeph! Eternally Joſeph, to a mathematician, who troubles himſelf as little concerning the inſects that devour each other, on this ridiculous globe, as he does concerning us idiots of the fifth ſatellite of Saturn.

But I wiſh to ſpeak a word on the buſt of Voltaire; and how ſhall I journey from Saturn to the poet? What tranſition will lead from one to the other? Truly that is more than I can ſay, yet

yet do I addreſs myſelf to the ſecretary of the French Academy, who, with ſome puriſt, ſome ſucceſſor to D'Olivet, will exclaim—"That "man knows not how to write; and Bouhours "rightly ſaid the atmoſphere of mind extends "from the Garonne to the Moſelle, beyond "which there is no common ſenſe."—For the preſent I ſtand reproved, and abaſhed. Time muſt place me in my proper rank, if time have the power; and you muſt regard me with indulgent eyes, and come hither to ſee me, if ſo you it ſuits.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CLXXX.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, July 2, 1779.

WHEN I had the honour laſt to write to your majeſty, the peace which you have juſt ſo glorioufly beſtowed on Germany was near a concluſion; and from that moment I thought myſelf authoriſed to teſtify to your majeſty all the joy I felt, at an event at once ſo fortunate for Europe, ſo precious to your people, and ſo

honourable to yourſelf. I now once more take the liberty to renew the ſame ſentiments, and to expreſs the admiration which I had the felicity to partake, with all who hear the name of your majeſty pronounced; admiration as univerſal as it is juſt; for never was monarch more generally revered, by the public, than you are at this moment. Of all nations, France is that which betokens the moſt ardent applauſe; ſo great, ſo prodigious, ſo general, is the enthuſiaſm!

It has been ſaid, I know not why, that your majeſty will make a tour to Paris. I dare affirm you would there receive the moſt ſplendid honours you have ever enjoyed, and of theſe I ſhould have the pleaſure to be a witneſs before I quit this gloomy world, which would then juſtly appear to me the beſt of all poſſible worlds. But I much fear, ſire, I muſt renounce ſo ſweet a hope, or rather ſo pleaſing a dream; as I am obliged to renounce, at leaſt this year, the deſire I have once again to lay all the ſentiments of reſpect, and admiration, with which I have ſo long been penetrated, at your majeſty's feet. The feeble ſtate of my health, which daily declines, and which ſcarcely permits me to uſe any mental and ſtill leſs bodily labour, deprives me of a ſatisfaction ſo dear to my heart.

For

For this I will conſole myſelf, as much as poſſible, by converſing with all I meet on the renown of your majeſty; by inceſſantly recollecting, with the moſt lively gratitude, the bounty with which you ſo long have honoured me; and particularly by learning that your health is better than ever, ſo as to afford Europe a long promiſe of an exemplary life of glory, genius, and virtue.

I dare not aſk your majeſty to interrupt your affairs, and employ your precious moments, to glance at the volume of academic learning, which I have had the honour to ſend. Should you deign to open it, you would at leaſt there find the moſt ſincere proofs of the gratitude and veneration which I owe you. I know not by what fatality it has been received ſo late; I ſent it the moment it came from the preſs. It remained, contrary to my expectations, three full months at Berlin, and was not given to your majeſty, till your return. This was too late to expreſs my own obligations to you, though perhaps too ſoon for my own intereſt, which may ſuffer by the judgment you may paſs on this rhapſody, ſhould you but for a moment deign to pay it any attention.

Perhaps your majeſty knows that the French Academy has propoſed an eulogium on Voltaire,

as a poetical ſubject for the prize; and that I have had the good fortune to render homage, on this occaſion, to the memory of my friend, by doubling the prize. We are to read and judge the rival pieces. May they be worthy of the ſubject! We have but one eulogium more to propoſe, and this I leave your majeſty to divine. I only wiſh circumſtances would permit us to offer ſo fine a ſubject to our poets, for the exerciſe of their talents.

Your majeſty has been pleaſed to mention the buſt of Voltaire. This buſt is a great likeneſs, made by a very able ſculptor, and worthy to adorn the cabinet of your majeſty, or the hall of the academy. Should your majeſty have any orders to give me, on this ſubject, I ſhall execute them with equal zeal and pleaſure.

We are not happy enough to enjoy, like your majeſty, the ſweets of peace; for theſe we muſt be contented to wait. May our wiſhes for its approach ſoon be gratified!

I conclude by aſking pardon of your majeſty, for having ſo long wearied you, with my loquacity. I can but renew my prayers for your happineſs, fame, and preſervation; and lay at your feet all the ſentiments of admiration, gratitude, and tender and profound reverence, with which I ſhall, to the laſt day of life, &c.

LET-

LETTER CLXXXI.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, September 19, 1779.

I AM returned from the country, where I have paſſed about three weeks, to repoſe after exertion; which, from certain circumſtances, has been rather exceſſive, and am in haſte to anſwer the kind letter your majeſty has written, for which I return my moſt humble and tender thanks. I am, at the ſame time, good Frenchman enough, and attached to your majeſty with ſufficient ſincerity, to perceive with great pleaſure your ſentiments, relative to our miniſtry, and the union which appears to be eſtabliſhed between the two courts. I have always thought that an alliance between France and your majeſty was a ſtate natural to both powers; that it was only for a time interrupted, by the hatred of a woman, who wiſhed to be revenged, for the juſt contempt in which ſhe was held by your majeſty, and by the ambition of a prieſt who was a wit, and would be a cardinal; and I now with

with great joy ſee that France may ſay, like Roxana,

Et que tout rentre ici dans l'ordre accoutumée.*

The French cannot be your enemies, like as you do not wiſh to be theirs. Independent of political intereſt, the admiration and reſpect with which the whole nation is penetrated, for your majeſty, are inexpreſſible. Men are never weary of the praiſes due to the firm, noble, and courageous conduct of your majeſty, in the late important affairs that agitated Germany. I have ſo often mentioned this that I fear leſt repetition ſhould aſſume the form of adulation; but no man can accuſe himſelf of ſuch a practice who is but the echo of the public voice, and never was it ſo unanimous, and ſo energetic, relative to your majeſty, as it is at the preſent moment.

How great would have been my ſatisfaction perſonally to have expreſſed theſe ſentiments, had my diſordered machine permitted me to hazard the fatigues of a long and painful journey! Never did I feel ſo ſtrong a deſire to go and throw myſelf at your majeſty's feet; but I fear I could not have ſtrength to travel ſo far. Yet can I not wholly renounce the hope of

* Henceforth be all in its accuſtomed order. A line from the Bajazet of Racine.

ſeeing and hearing you; and if, in my preſent feeble ſtate, I ſhould find ſome interval of ſtrength, I will inſtantly profit by it, to ſatisfy the wiſh of my heart.

We have adjudged the prize of the French Academy for the eulogium of Voltaire, to which I added ſix hundred livres; that, with the widow's mite, I might honour the memory of my illuſtrious friend. The poem which gained the prize abounds with excellent lines. The author refuſed to own himſelf, and ceded the medal to the piece which gained the *Acceſſit**, and which likewiſe had much merit. The anonymous perſon is ſuppoſed to be M. de la Harpe.

The French Academy poſſeſſes the buſt of Voltaire, which I before had the honour to mention. The gift was mine, but as I am not rich it is only in *terra cotta*. Your majeſty may have it in marble when you pleaſe; the price is a thouſand crowns. Should you think proper to ſend me your commands, they will be executed with all haſte. Perhaps you may wiſh for two, one for yourſelf and another for the academy, where the buſt would certainly be received with all the ſentiments due to the donor, and the original. I forgot to inform your ma-

* The ſecond prize. T.

jeſty

jeſty that this buſt is executed in two different ways. The likeneſs of both is great. The one is according to the antique, with the head bare; the other with a perruque, which is not ſo pictureſque, but which at the ſame time greatly adds to the exactneſs of the reſemblance. That which I gave the academy is in the laſt manner.

Your remarks are but too well founded on the general decline of letters, and the void left by the death of Voltaire. But ſuch is the fate of humanity! When our literature even ſhall revive, I doubt it, will be long before it will produce a man ſo uncommon, and who ſhall unite talents ſo various in ſo high a degree. While Frederic ſhall live, Europe may conſole herſelf by the poſſeſſion of one great man. Live long therefore, ſire, and long enjoy your own glory, the admiration of Europe, and the benedictions of Germany.

I am, with the moſt tender veneration, the moſt lively gratitude, &c.

LETTER CLXXXII.

From the King.

Undated*.

THAT you may not imagine no one labours in the Lord's vineyard, after the death of our patriarch, this letter is accompanied by a production of the brotherhood of the Baltic, who collect as many ſtones as they can to lapidate their enemy. The Commentary† I here ſend you is written according to the principles of Huet, Calmet, Labbadie, and numerous other lunatics, whoſe wild imaginations have led them to prove, from certain books, things that never were there.

The other work developes the origin of the ties of ſociety, and of certain of the duties of thoſe who live united by the ſocial compact. No great effects have been produced; but, ſhould the author convert one in a thouſand, he may venture to applaud himſelf, and be perſuaded that he has not wholly loſt his time.

The buſt of Voltaire which you mention gives

* This letter is miſplaced in the French editions; and from the next letter we learn its date is October the 7th. T.

† See Vol. V. p. 177. T.

me

me a great inclination to purchaſe it, did not the expenſive war which we have juſt concluded make our waters ebb for a time. This affair muſt be remitted to the coming year, when our feathers will begin once more to grow. You know the proverb—*Point d'argent point de Suiſſe* *—No money no buſt.

From your letter I learn that you have been in the country, as a recreation after your labours. This was well done, for the mind muſt have relief. Were the bow kept continually bent, it would ſoon wholly loſe its elaſticity. You gave me at the ſame time a hope, in perſpective, of once more ſeeing Protagoras in theſe abodes. I wiſh you had the arrow of Abaris, or the chariot of Elijah, that you might travel with greater ſpeed and eaſe. Should Voltaire have bequeathed his Pegaſus to you, that may be the beſt mode of conveyance. I ſhall then order our aſtronomers to plant their teleſcopes in a proper direction, that they may give me notice of your coming. I cannot but add that, ſhould the journey be too long delayed, it might happen when you arrive I ſhall myſelf have taken my departure. I am old and feeble; my conſtitution is broken; Death has no need of

* No money no Swiſs; or, according to the Engliſh proverb, money makes the mare to go. T.

his darts to vanquiſh me; my exiſtence is but a ſpider's thread, which may be broken without trouble. For this I care but little. Somewhat ſooner ſomewhat later. What we are others ſhall be, *et circulus circulorum*. Poſterity ſhall go the road their predeceſſors have taught them, by travelling it firſt.

State politics appear to me to have ſome affinity with religion. One ſchiſm ariſes after another. The followers of Ali occaſionally are more potent than the diſciples of Omar. Truth ſhall finally prevail, and evident proofs of the true intereſts of ſtates ſhall conquer temporary deluſion. Truth is characteriſed by ſomething ſo ſimple, and ſo palpable, that, provided there be no natural contortion or error of mind, it muſt conquer. No man can deny that two and two make four; nor will any one think proper to affirm that the three angles of a triangle are not equal to two right angles. The ſame may be ſaid of many things in politics, which may be proved with certitude approaching mathematical demonſtration. That one idea ſhould be more ſtriking at one moment than at another depends on time and circumſtance; eſpecially when the eyes of certain perſons, who ſerve as pivots to the political machine of Europe, are not blinded by prejudice. And here have you a moſt excel-

lent

lent algebraico-politico-olio, by which you will perceive I begin to dote. Come quickly, therefore, or you will not find me at home.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CLXXXIII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, November 19, 1779.

I HAVE for ſome weeks been in the moſt diſtreſſing anxiety, at not having received any letter from your majeſty. Why ſhould I not venture to avow this, ſince the origin of ſuch ſenſations at leaſt cannot diſpleaſe, and ſince it is dictated by my tender veneration? From the baron von Goltz I heard that your majeſty was in good health, and I was afflicted at your long ſilence. Not that I am ignorant that your majeſty has much better employment than to anſwer the rhapſodies I write; but your bounty, ſire, has been ſo great to me that, allow me the expreſſion, I am a ſpoilt child; nor can I be quiet, unleſs I occaſionally receive a few conſolatory lines, ſigned Frederic.

At length I was agreeably relieved, by receiving, ſome few days ſince, a charming letter from

your majeſty, dated October 7th. Its arrival was five weeks after the date, becauſe the packet with which it was accompanied no doubt could not be expedited by the poſt. I am the moſt lively thanks in your debt, ſire, for the letter and the packet, ſo valuable in every reſpect, as well for its contents as becauſe of the revered and cheriſhed hand from which it comes. I did not loſe a moment, ſire, to read and read again the two excellent works it contains. Nothing can be more pleaſant, more philoſophic, more humorous, than the theological commentary on Blue-beard. Had your majeſty paſſed your whole life in reading Don Calmet, and the other abſurd ſcholiaſts, you could not with greater art, or more eſſentially to the cauſe of reaſon, have turned ſuch follies to ridicule. I am ſincerely afflicted that this truly philoſophic pleaſantry is not more generally diſperſed over Paris, that our myſtics and fanatics might be overwhelmed with all the ignominy of which they are worthy. I promiſe myſelf at leaſt to communicate it to all our ſages, and even to thoſe who are not ſage. Your majeſty ought, from motives of chriſtian and particularly of apoſtolic charity, to ſend a copy to the biſhop of Puy, whom you have made to ſpeak ſo well. The addreſs of this learned and eloquent prelate is no longer at Puy,

Puy, but at Vienne in Dauphiné, of which he has been made archbiſhop, as a recompenſe for his fine compoſitions in favour of * * *. The commentary on Blue-beard muſt gain him the archbiſhopric of Paris, ſhould the ſee, by the grace of God, become vacant. But we ſhall probably long preſerve Chriſtopher de Beaumont, for the glory divine and the church's edification!

So great is the pleaſure I have received from this humorous work that I ſhould never conclude, had I not ſtill to ſpeak of a ſecond work, which I at the ſame time received from your majeſty; I mean your excellent letters on the love of our country, which in their kind merit no leſs praiſe than the commentary, though praiſe of a very different ſpecies. It is a treatiſe of patriotic morals, abounding in feeling eloquence, and profound reaſoning, ſuch as Cicero might have written. Nothing more intereſting, more affecting, or better founded, could have been ſaid on the ſubject. The book deſerves to be put into the hands of youth, as the baſis of an excellent moral education; nor can I too earneſtly entreat your majeſty to make it one of the books appropriated for the inſtruction of young ſtudents, in your kingdom, in every province, and for all ranks. Nothing can appear

pear to me more proper to form zealous and virtuous citizens. Such is *the catechiſm* they ought to be taught.

Still however I am afflicted, and hope your majeſty will permit me to open my heart on the ſubject. I am ſorry that, in a book in which the juſt and natural love of our country is recommended, you appear deſirous to combat what you call the Encyclopediſts. I do not recollect, ſire, that, in any paſſage of this vaſt dictionary, any one has had the folly, and the audacity, to oppoſe the love of our country. I certainly ſhould not have admitted any ſuch article, during the time that I was at the head of the work. Some pretended philoſopher, for many fools at preſent uſurp the title, may have printed, in an unknown pamphlet, abſurd follies againſt patriotiſm; but believe me, ſire, all philoſophers, truly worthy of the appellation, would diſavow ſuch pamphlet, were they acquainted with it; or would rather do themſelves the juſtice to diſdain anſwering an imputation ſo ill-founded.

I cannot too often repeat to your majeſty that, not philoſophers, but, prieſts are the real enemies of their country, of the laws, and of good order and legitimate authority. Were I thirty years younger, I ſhould find no trouble to demonſtrate

monſtrate this; but I am at preſent ſixty-two, and if I may be allowed ſo to do would wiſh to ſpend the few days I have to live in peace.

My great wiſh is that I might not end theſe ſorrowful days, without once again laying the tender and reſpectful homage which, for ſo many reaſons, I owe you, at your majeſty's feet. Though my health daily becomes more feeble, though my mind is ſcarcely capable of any exertion, and though I ſleep and digeſt ill enough, I yet cannot totally renounce the ſweet hope of liſtening to your majeſty: like the devout, who flatter themſelves they ſhall one day enter Paradiſe, there to behold God face to face. May this God give or reſtore me a little ſtrength, by which I will profit, with all the zeal of one of the bleſſed, to renew the moſt ardent ſentiments of admiration, gratitude, and profound and tender veneration, with which I ſhall to my laſt ſigh, &c.

LETTER CLXXXIV.

From the King.

December 3, 1779.

I WAS rather uneaſy concerning the fate of my letters, and the packet which accompanied them.

them. I ſuſpected the poſt-offices of treachery. I carried ſuſpicion ſo far as even to ſuppoſe neither my letter nor my books would be delivered, becauſe aſſertions might there have been found ſhocking to pious ears, and ſmelling of hereſy. Nay I dreaded leſt my ſilly whims, announced to my lord the archbiſhop of Paris, ſhould draw down excommunication major, on the poor heretic, the author of that pious work. At length your letter arrived, and my fears are flown.

Your judgment on theſe poor productions is too favourable. What good can ſpring from the brain of an ignorant old man, who all his life has been the ſport of fortune, whom action robs of the time he might employ in meditation, who daily loſes his ſenſes and his memory, and who will ſoon depart to join the lord marſhal, Algarotti, and Voltaire? Energy of mind appertains to that age when the man is in full force. He then may produce good works, provided he have the neceſſary knowledge, talents, and genius; but age deſtroys every thing; the ſoul declines with the body. The laſt loſes its ſtrength, and the firſt its vigour. My intention, while writing theſe rhapſodies, was good; but, for the execution, a more able hand, and a more academic ſtyle, were requiſite.

You are aſtoniſhed that the letters of Philopatros

tros ſpeak of the Encyclopediſts. I have read in their works that the love of our country is a prejudice which government has endeavoured to eſtabliſh; and that, in an age enlightened like the preſent, we ought to rid ourſelves of theſe ancient chimeras. This may be found in one of the works which appeared before, or ſoon after, the Syſtem of Nature. Such aſſertions ought to be refuted, for the good of ſociety. However, to juſtify myſelf fully, I muſt add that here, in Germany, we place all the works which lunatics produce in France to the account of the Encyclopediſts. I ſpeak to the public, I muſt therefore employ the language of the public; for I hope your good opinion of me is ſufficient to lead you to believe that I do not confound D'Alembert with Jean Jacques, Diderot, and thoſe ſelf-created philoſophers who are the diſgrace of letters.

I accept with pleaſure the hope you give me that I ſhall once more ſee Anaxagoras, before I die; but I muſt inform you there is no time to loſe. My memory fails, my hair grows grey, my ardour is extinct, and nothing will ſoon remain of the ſelf-called philoſopher of Sans Souci. Still you will not be received with leſs eagerneſs, charmed as I ſhall be to teſtify my eſteem.

On which I pray, &c.

LET-

LETTER CLXXXV.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, December 27, 1779.

I BEGIN this letter and the anſwer which I owe your majeſty as I ought, by the object which intereſts me moſt, the ardent wiſhes I make for you, your fame, your happineſs, your preſervation and your health, ſo ineſtimable to your people, to Europe, the repoſe of which it aſcertains, and, if I dare name myſelf, to me who for more than thirty years have been ſo reſpectfully, and ſo tenderly, attached to your majeſty. You now conclude the fortieth year of the moſt glorious reign with which hiſtory is acquainted. May you reign forty more! May you long bear the bleſſings with which Germany loads your majeſty; and hear the ſtrong expreſſions of admiration with which you inſpire all Europe.

I had previouſly been informed, by the public papers, of the fit of the gout which your majeſty has ſuſtained; and I wiſh what I have farther been informed of, by baron Grimm, were known to all Europe and her kings; which is that, not being able to write with your right hand,

hand, you were determined to write with your left, that ſtate affairs might be diſpatched. How reſpectable is activity like this, and how worthy to be admired, when, as in this inſtance, the good of the people is its ſole object! M. de la Haye de Launay, who is here, and who ſometimes viſits me, at that part of the day when I have a ſelect ſociety of the admirers of your majeſty, has enchanted us by the recital he has made, of the acts of benevolence, juſtice, and if I dared I ſhould ſay providence, which employ every day of your life.

Your majeſty imagines the gout in your right hand is a divine puniſhment, for the very pleaſant and very philoſophic commentary on Bluebeard, which that hand had the impiety to write. I take the liberty to recommend the prieſts, the theologians, and all the follies they retail, to your majeſty's left hand, when the right ſhall be unable to graſp the thunder. They deſerve additional chaſtiſement, from a philoſophic king, by daily becoming worſe. They at preſent refuſe the French Academy the ſatisfaction of rendering funeral honours to the memory of the great Voltaire; and government, which hates and deſpiſes them, appears, I know not why, to ſupport this trait of fanaticiſm!

Fortunately the manes of this great man have

been moſt worthily honoured, by the eloquent and affecting eulogium of your majeſty, which is of more worth than any funeral ſervice, even though performed by his holineſs the pope himſelf. I again take the liberty to invite your majeſty to purchaſe the marble buſt of this uncommon man; nor can I forbear to ſay how much I was moved, by what you did me the honour to write on the ſubject, remitting the expence to another year. This proof of truly royal œconomy has enraptured all to whom it has been related. They join, with me, in wiſhes that other ſovereigns might imitate that example, by imparting to their expences a degree of order, and attention, ſo neceſſary to the welfare of their ſubjects.

You have, in your excellent work on the love of our country, moſt eloquently and effectively refuted the abominable aſſertions, which you affirm you have read, in one of the vile books which appeared about the ſame time as the Syſtem of Nature. But believe me, ſire, neither this ſyſtem nor any of thoſe vile books have been written by any true philoſopher, or author worthy of the name. It is vexatious to thoſe honeſt men, who have inſerted their labours in the Encyclopedie, that all the crude nonſenſe which ſhall appear muſt be placed to

their

their account; and that the epithet of Encyclopediſts ſhould be given to the enemies of their country. Alas! ſire, had I not loved mine, I ſhould long ſince have been with your majeſty. I love this country ſtill, though I am there loaded with indignities, to which indeed I am little ſenſible, but which government, I know not for what ſublime motive, not only permits but encourages and rewards.

This is the recompenſe beſtowed on me, for the ſacrifices I have made to my country, and for the labour of five and forty years, without having ever merited, either by my writings or my conduct, reproach for my behaviour as a citizen. The favours heaped on me, by your majeſty, are high remuneration for this injuſtice. Why can I not yet repair to enjoy theſe ſame favours in your preſence? Though I do not renounce the project, I dare not abſolutely form it; ſo feeble, ſo variable, and ſo wavering is my health. I redouble my attention, and if poſſible will profit by the firſt moment of returning ſtrength, again to lay thoſe ſentiments, with which my heart ſo long has been full, at your majeſty's feet.

M. de Catt will be kind enough to give the memorial of the poor curate, who affirms he is perſecuted by a fanatic biſhop, and who im-

plores the bounty and protection of your majesty, for your inspection. I have promised the curate you will do him justice according to his merits, and I request you would be pleased to send me your answer, by M. de Catt.

I am this year, as I shall be every other, with the most tender veneration, and the most lively gratitude, &c.

LETTER CLXXXVI.

From the King.

Undated.

As, with me, the wishes of a philosopher are much preferable to the prayers of a monk, you have a right to expect my thanks for your good wishes on the new year. And, as I am as little * * * as yourself, I flatter myself that, if I wish Heaven should shed its benefits on you and on all the lovers of wisdom, you will not find any thing disagreeable in the wish. May you, then, during the coming year, live in peace, void of dispute, excommunication, and anathema; and may those dregs of the human race, whom we bishops name, become rational and tolerant! But, I am afraid, it will be as difficult

difficult to render your prieſts humane as to teach ſpeech to elephants.

Good God! How opprobrious is it, to the clergy of France, ſo obſtinately to perſiſt to injure the great man whom we have loſt! I maintain theſe tonſured prieſts are ungrateful. Voltaire has often blunted the darts he has hurled, that the wound might not be too painful. Another, who ſhould ſpare them leſs, might lay them in the duſt, never more to riſe. Philoſophers have ſkirmiſhed, here and there; they have made ſallies, but the empirics of ſuperſtition have never had their ranks totally broken; they have never been beaten and entirely diſperſed. Arms are ready prepared for the combat, and were I young I would attack the Lernian hydra, like Hercules; the papal beaſt, whoſe concentrated vices are productive of new heads. Truth here ſhould overthrow their abſurd fables; there virtue ſhould bring to light that ſtring of crimes with which the eccleſiaſtic hierarchy is ſtained. But theſe are weapons which ſhould be wielded by vigorous arms, and mine are gouty. At my birth, I found the world the ſlave of ſuperſtition, and dying ſo ſhall leave it. The reaſon of this is that the people ſwallow twelve articles of faith like ſo many pills, while they are more jealous of what concerns their

liberty and property. They do not perceive that, thus chained by dogmas, their ſlavery is the inevitable conſequence. With reſpect to thoſe who haraſs you, I adviſe you to oppoſe to them the armour of Fontenelle, who of all the learned was the ſage who moſt avoided to engage in wrangles with the vipers of the ſacred valley. For my own part, I ſometimes combat with the Auſtrians, and ſometimes with the gout; and, when I am aſſailed by the latter, ſince nature has given me two hands, I think that, if diſeaſe deprives me of the uſe of one, the other ought to perform its functions. I have at preſent driven off the foe, and have vanquiſhed Mr. Gout, who loves good cheer, by preſcribing him the regimen of the hermits of the Thebais. I immediately inquired into the affair of your prieſt of Neufchatel, to whom juſtice ſhall be done.

I wiſh your health may be perfectly re-eſtabliſhed, or I ſhall ſay, with madame Deſhoulieres—

Oui, c'eſt deſeſpérer que d'eſpérer toujours.*

Since my return to Berlin, I have wiſhed to rub off the ruſt of my campaign, and lay on an academic varniſh. I have converſed with M.

* Protracted hope is equal to deſpair.

Formey,

Formey, who moſt learnedly, and moſt profoundly, to my great edification, diſcourſed on ſubjects moſt grave, of the truth of which our perpetual ſecretary wiſhed to convince me. Another day, the Homeric Bitaubé aſſured me that the author of the Iliad, and the Odyſſey, was the ſole poet which a long ſucceſſion of ages had produced.

I then corroborated my faith by the ſage, political, and philoſophical reflections of M. Weguelin; and, as earthly cares had for a time made me forget heaven, M. Bernouilli was kind enough to communicate to me the itinerary of the ſtars. From him I learned that it was ſuſpected the court of Venus was more numerous than it had been ſuppoſed to be; and that indications had been diſcovered of one of her ſatellites. I, who travel faſt in caſe of need, inſtantly baptiſed this ſatellite Cupid, and recommended myſelf to the favour of the goddeſs, the new ſatellite, and the three Graces.

M. Bernouilli pretends, by the aid of this ſatellite, who apparently is a ſpy, the exact ſize of the Cytherean goddeſs may be calculated, as certainly as if he had meaſured her with her own ceſtus. I earneſtly entreated him to keep this a ſecret, that he might not bring the works of

Phidias and Praxiteles, who have ſculptured the goddeſs in ſo ſuperior a ſtyle, into diſcredit.

I then ſaw M. de la Grange, who endeavoured to temper the ſublimity of his language in an inverſe ratio to the ſquare of my ignorance. He led me, from abſtraction to abſtraction, into labyrinths ſo dark that my poor underſtanding would have loſt its road, had not our good Swiſs, M. Merian, conducted me from theſe high infinitesimal regions, and ſafely landed me on the abject and crude globe on which I vegetate.

M. Achard finally taught me what fixed air is, and without difficulty brought me to own that matter has an infinite number of properties, which have hitherto eſcaped our knowledge; and that, according to the plan of Bacon, it will only be by reiterated experiments that we ſhall in time ſomewhat extend our narrow ſphere of ſcience. Unfortunately, the firſt principles of things will ever remain beyond our feeble penetration.

Such is an abridgment of the ſhort academical courſe to which I ſubmitted, during my illneſs, which is not worthy the trouble of communicating to the ſublime Anaxagoras. Had I had any thing more intereſting to tell him, I certainly ſhould not have told him this.

On which I pray, &c.

LET-

LETTER CLXXXVII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, February 29, 1780.

THE two letters I have received from your majeſty, within a few days of each other, and which have been rather long on the road, for they did not arrive till three weeks after date, came very a-propos to calm my apprehenſions, which took birth from the hazarded and indiſcreet reports relative to your majeſty's health. Baron von Goltz had indeed much quieted my fears, by certifying what little foundation there was for ſuch rumours. But, ſire, the greater our affection the greater our fears; and I ſtood in need of an aſſurance under your majeſty's own hand of their falſity. This you have given me, not only by deigning to enter with me, at ſome length, into the ſubject by which I am ſo much intereſted, but, by writing two letters, the one of which, from its abundant humour, and the other becauſe of its philoſophy, at once feeling and forcible, cannot be the productions of a ſick man. Long may you preſerve health ſo precious to multitudes, and ſo formidable to the enemies of peace! Men like you ought

to be immortal; to loſe ſuch is one of the misfortunes of humanity.

I have only within theſe few days received the ſix copies your majeſty has been pleaſed to ſend me, of the very pleaſant, very philoſophic Commentary on Blue-beard; and theſe I gave to men worthy to receive the preſent, and capable of knowing its value; men who, like me, are admirers of your majeſty, and who, without any knowledge of you, except from the voice of fame, are almoſt equally devoted to you.

I have once more very lately read this excellent commentary, and am aſtoniſhed that ſo happy and ſo natural an idea, to mock what the fooliſh multitude worſhip, ſhould never before have been conceived. It is evident that all the commentaries on Iſaiah, Ezekiel, and Baruch, are not more intelligible than yours, and are much leſs pleaſant. Oh that the preſs had been ſomewhat more free in France! I would then have extracted an excellent article from this commentary, for one of our journals. Though to own the truth, ſire, there are few of them worthy of ſuch a morſel, loaded as they are with nonſenſe. Though I cannot make the Gauls acquainted with the work, I will yet introduce it to the knowledge of thoſe who are worthy to read it, and the number of whom daily increaſes, thanks

to

to the example which your majeſty has afforded Europe, of the profound contempt in which you hold all human ſuperſtitions.

Well may your majeſty's indignation riſe at the treatment which ſuch ſuperſtitions have excited, in France, againſt the memory of Voltaire. May I venture, ſire, to propoſe a trifling reparation, which would ſomewhat mortify the fanatics? I mean that of performing a maſs for him in your catholic church of Berlin, which favour the Gauls have refuſed. They have lately inſulted his memory, in a moſt indecent manner, in the pleadings of one of the counſellors of the parliament of Paris, before the parliament of Rouen. Our parliaments, ſire, are more ſtupid, and more ignorant, than the Sorbonne; and that is indubitably a bold aſſertion.

M. de Launay *, who intends inceſſantly to depart and render an account to your majeſty of all the good and evil he has obſerved, in this country, has ſeveral times viſited thoſe ſocieties which are three times a week held at my houſe, conſiſting of men of letters, and men of the world, who are the moſt ſelect and beſt informed. He can aſſure your majeſty that there

* This, no doubt, is the De Launay ſo often mentioned in the Secret Hiſtory of the Court of Berlin, one of the moſt ſingular books the age has produced. T.

was

was not one of theſe converſations in which each perſon did not expreſs, with equal energy and intereſt, thoſe ſentiments of admiration, and reſpect, with which each is penetrated for you.

You have lately, ſire, increaſed thoſe juſt ſentiments, by the excellent ordinances you have laſt publiſhed, for the adminiſtration of juſtice, and which the wiſeſt of legiſlators would have envied your majeſty. How, ſire, would you puniſh numbers of our French judges, convicted not merely of having vexed an unfortunate peaſant, like thoſe of Cuſtrin, but of having condemned the innocent to death! Hence it happens that ſome of our parliamentary cabals think the puniſhment your majeſty has inflicted very *rigorous*; for they dare not employ any other word. Their cenſure is increaſe of praiſe.

A man of letters and much wit, M. de Ruilliere, who three or four years ago had the honour to pay his court to your majeſty, and who is the author of a very curious and well-written hiſtory of the tragic cataſtrophe of Peter III. has been ſeveral years at work on the Hiſtory of the Revolution of Poland, and the partition of that country. As he particularly wiſhes to ſpeak the truth, conſequently, to expreſs the juſt ſentiments of admiration with which he is penetrated for your majeſty, he has entreated me to aſk whether

whether there would be no indiſcretion in teſtifying to your majeſty a deſire that you would be pleaſed to procure him memorials, on that important event; of the worth of which he would be ſenſible, of which he would make a moſt intereſting uſe, and would beſide ſubmit to ſuch conditions as your majeſty ſhould think proper to exact. He waits with the greateſt impatience the anſwer your majeſty ſhall be pleaſed to ſend.

I am, with the moſt profound and tender ſentiments of reſpect, admiration, and gratitude, with which I have been for near forty years devoted to you, &c.

LETTER CLXXXVIII.

From the King.

Undated *.

I KNOW not by what accident an account of the ſentences paſſed in this country is become current, among foreign nations. Laws

* This letter in the French editions is the laſt of the correſpondence; but its contents denote its true place, except that it is difficult to ſay whether this or the next ſhould be read firſt. It refers to the memorable affair of the miller Arnold, which M. D'Alembert had alluded to in the preceding letter. T.

were

were made for the protection of the weak againſt the oppreſſion of the powerful, and would be every where obſerved, were thoſe who are their organs and executors attentively watched. You poſſeſs admirable diſcourſes, delivered by your preſidents at the beginning of your parliamentary ſeſſions, which ſhew that thoſe able judges have endeavoured to warn counſellors, againſt all the foibles and vices of humanity, by which they might be induced to prevaricate. But to warn is not always ſufficient; examples of ſeverity are ſometimes neceſſary, that a body of counſellors ſo numerous may be reſtrained within the limits of duty. Kings were originally the judges of the ſtate. Multiplicity of buſineſs has obliged them to commit that branch of government to perſons in whom they confide. Still they ought not to neglect this part of adminiſtration, ſo far as to tolerate thoſe who abuſe their name, and authority, for the commiſſion of injuſtice.

This is the reaſon that has obliged me to watch over thoſe whoſe duty it is to do juſtice, becauſe an iniquitous judge is worſe than a highwayman. To ſecure citizens in their poſſeſſions, and to render them as happy as human nature will admit them to be, are the duties of thoſe who are placed at the head of ſocieties; and

theſe duties I endeavour to execute, to the beſt of my abilities. Or to what purpoſe ſhould I have read Plato, Ariſtotle, and the laws of Lycurgus and Solon? True philoſophy is to practiſe the good leſſons of philoſophers. Such you will bequeath to future ages; and your leſſons, productive in the mind of poſterity, will in their turn form men whoſe endeavours will be to become the benefactors of the human race.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CLXXXIX.

From the King.

March 26, 1780*.

BAD roads muſt have retarded the arrival of the poſt, for there are neither pirates nor privateers on terra firma, between Berlin and Paris; ſo that the interruption of our correſpondence can only be attributed to the ſudden thaws, and inundations, which have ſpoiled the roads. Your letter has in like manner been three weeks on the road, but was not the leſs welcome. Beauties gain by making the company wait.

* Undated in the Berlin edition. T.

With

With reſpect to my age, you muſt naturally preſume that, being ſixty-eight, I muſt begin to be infirm. Sometimes the gout, at others the ſciatica, or ſome temporary fever, amuſe themſelves at the expence of my exiſtence, and prepare me to quit the worn-out caſe of my ſoul. Nature ſeems willing to diſguſt us with life, by loading us with infirmities toward its cloſe. At ſuch a period we may ſay, with the emperor Marcus Aurelius—"We reſign ourſelves, without a murmur, to all which the eternal laws of nature have condemned us to ſuffer."

But let us quit this grave ſubject, for one more amuſing. Blue-beard may have afforded you ſome entertainment; the idea is not amiſs. Had Voltaire treated the ſubject, his mode of embelliſhing it would have been different. I have a doctor of the Sorbonne here, at preſent, who gives me leſſons on theological abſurdities, by which I make a rapid progreſs. From him I learn what external and internal intention are. Curious things theſe! Of which, as great a philoſopher as you are, you are ignorant! He has taught me a formula of nonſenſe inconceivable, by which I intend to profit, in the firſt theological work I ſhall write. Nay, I flatter myſelf, I ſhall give check-mate to Tamponet, Ribailler, and even to Larchet, and to the greateſt among the

the luminaries of the Sorbonne. I am farther provided with ſome fifty of the moſt ſubtile diſtinctions; ſuch as are the moſt artful and proper to conceal, by their obſcurity, the moſt evident truths.

Proud of ſuch knowledge, and inflated with noble daring, I aſpire no leſs than to become a doctor of the Sorbonne myſelf; and having already afforded proofs of my ſcientific learning, in the work on Blue-beard, I mean to attain the titled dignity of commentator to the ſacred faculty! Charles V. retired to the convent of St. Juſt, and the Sorbonne ſhall become the aſylum of my old age! It ſhall be to me inſtead of purgatory; and, when I quit Ribailler and Patouillet, it ſhall be for Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob. Accuſtomed to yawn in the company of doctors, I ſhall eaſily accommodate myſelf to the yawning of the patriarchs; and my voice will be leſs diſcordant while eternally ſinging one eternal hallelujah. Full of that flaming zeal by which I am animated, and eaten up, full of the deſire of making proſelytes, I make you the propoſal of entering the Sorbonne with me. I will comment on their blunders, and you ſhall calculate their follies, if you can but find figures enough.

We muſt act cunningly, to ſteal a maſs from our prieſts, and a ſervice for Voltaire. The Ger-

mans have only heard his name as that of an atheiſt, a Vanini, a Spinoſa, and we muſt negociate that the cataſtrophe of this maſs may be fortunate. The doctors of the Sorbonne, be maſs ſaid or be it not ſaid, will maintain he is damned, and will devote him to the empire of the prince of darkneſs. Their wounds, alas! ſtill bleed; and the ſpur of pleaſantry has been ſtruck ſo deep that the extreme pain they felt is not, nor will be ſoon, appeaſed; for whoever attacks the church attacks God; and whoever attacks God ought to be extirpated from the face of the earth. This is clear; a formal ſyllogiſm; conſequently, Voltaire at preſent is conſigned to the infernal caldron.

But quit we hell, and let us return to Paris, where you tell me that M. de Ruillieres, whom I know, propoſes to write a hiſtory of the late troubles in Poland. It ſeems to me the epocha is too recent for a hiſtorian to be able to explain himſelf, on that event, with all proper freedom. The actors ſtill exiſt, and it will be difficult, while ſpeaking the truth, not to offend any one. The ſubſtance of what can be ſaid on the ſubject is reduced to this. The diſcontented Poles confederated, to dethrone the king, whom the empreſs of Ruſſia had ſet over them; ſome propoſitions, relative to toleration in religion, offended them

them ſo far that they wiſhed to aſſaſſinate their monarch; the court of Vienna, by ſeizing on the principality of Zips, occaſioned the partition of the kingdom, for the empreſs of Ruſſia thought ſhe had a right to revenge herſelf, for the intractable obſtinacy of the republic. To enter further into the ſubject would be to deſcend to perſonal minutiæ, which can only ſafely appear before the eyes of poſterity.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CXC.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, April 14, 1780.

I CANNOT too often repeat, nor with too much pleaſure, that the letters of your majeſty are the beſt anſwers to thoſe who wiſh to believe the rumours that are circulated concerning your health. That which you did me the honour to write, on the 26th of March, is of the moſt true and poignant kind of humour. Your converſations with the doctor of the Sorbonne, under whom you have ſtudied theology, will deſerve to be read to the ſacred faculty. I am only aſtoniſhed that your majeſty, having ſo

many great and excellent things on your mind, can ſtill find a place in which to depoſit the abſurdities of the Sorbonne. I hope they will be productive of ſome new commentary on *Cinderilla*, or on *the Sleeping Beauty of the Wood.*

Till this ſhall appear, approved by the holy Inquiſition, as it cannot fail to be, I cannot too earneſtly conjure your majeſty to render thoſe funeral honours, to the manes of Voltaire, in the catholic church of Berlin, which the Gauls pertinaciouſly refuſe. I know that the ſacerdotal gang of all countries, and all religions, regard him as an atheiſt; but I likewiſe know that, in all countries, the ſacerdotal gang is obliged to obey princes like you; eſpecially when the demand is a juſt one, and conformable to every thing which the doctors call the canons of the church.

For the eaſe of their conſciences, it will be ſufficient for your majeſty to lay the papers ſent with this letter before them, which are ſigned and certified by two of the nephews of M. de Voltaire, one of whom is the abbé Mignot, counſellor of the grand council, and the other M. d'Hornoy, counſellor of the parliament; both of them reſpectable men in their companies.

In the firſt piece, No. 1, your catholic prieſts will

will ſee the narrative of every thing which happened during the illneſs of this great man; and there find proofs of the injuſtice that has been committed, according to eſtabliſhed rules, by refuſing him burial, at Paris, and a funeral ſervice. I dare flatter myſelf that, ſhould not your majeſty have time to examine theſe details, would you pleaſe to order any reaſonable man to read and inſpect the papers, he will allow, however good a catholic he may be, that the prieſts of the Roman church cannot legally refuſe a ſervice. Great will be the joy your majeſty will inſpire thoſe with who are the admirers of that uncommon man, by this new mark of honour rendered to his memory! I, in particular, ſhall be penetrated with the moſt lively gratitude.

It is my duty to add that the nephews of M. de Voltaire, from whom I obtained theſe different pieces, earneſtly requeſt your majeſty will not ſuffer them to be publiſhed. They only wiſh to enable your majeſty to prove, to the German catholics, that they may, without wounding their conſcience, pray to God for him who wrote ſo many fine works, and performed ſo many fine actions.

I and they wait with impatience to learn what your majeſty ſhall pleaſe to command, on the

ſubject. I alſo wait your orders relative to the marble buſt, the likeneſs of which is excellent, and which you ſeemed willing to purchaſe this year. The workmanſhip is maſterly, the price only three thouſand French livres (one hundred and twenty-five pounds ſterling) and the ſculptor engages it ſhall be ſafely delivered at Potſdam.

M. de Ruillieres, to whom I read the paſſage from your majeſty's letter in which he is mentioned, is penetrated with gratitude, and will employ theſe few lines in his hiſtory of the revolution of Poland, which to him appear very precious, and very eſſential.

A Seneſchal of Corlaix, in Lower Brittany, has addreſſed ſome verſes to me for your majeſty, which he deſires me to ſend you. The name of the poet is Georgelin; he is a perſon of the long robe, and praiſes your majeſty for having taught magiſtrates their duty; his homage therefore is not of a ſuſpicious nature.

Frédéric réunit tous les droits à la gloire;
Il offre, en chaque genre, un modèle nouveau.
Comme il ſait, en ſon camp, enchaîner la victoire,
Il fait chérir la paix, même juſqu'au barreau.*

* Frederic poſſeſſes every claim to glory, of each ſpecies of which he has fomed new models. In his camp he leads Victory in chains, and obliges even lawyers to live in peace.

I will

I will not ſpeak to your majeſty of the ſtate of my fragile machine. M. de Catt, ſhould you permit him, may weary you with ſuch details. I conſole myſelf by knowing that your majeſty is in good health, and by flattering myſelf I ſhall be your harbinger to the banks of Acheron, where my arrival will long precede yours. May your departure ſuffer all poſſible delay! And may that deſtiny which preſides over the lives of great men long multiply your days!

I am, with the moſt profound and moſt tender veneration, &c.

LETTER CXCI.

From the King.

Undated.

AS I have only the gout in my feet, and not in my head, it does not prevent me, my dear D'Alembert, from preſerving ſome remains of my former cheerfulneſs. I am more inclined to follow the example of Democritus than eternally to weep with Heraclitus, for misfortunes which we cannot redreſs. Thus the fools of the Sorbonne amuſe me as much as the Harlequin Savage of the Italian comedy. To learn from the

wiſe, and to divert themſelves with fools, are acts worthy of men of ſenſe. Thus therefore I act; and I can aſſure you that thoſe of your monks who plume themſelves moſt, on their obſcure ſcience, are the perſons who moſt promote my recreation.

However great the efforts of your theologic race, to decry Voltaire after his death, I diſcover nothing in them but the impotent attempts of envious rage, which covers its authors with opprobrium. Provided with the juſtificatory pieces which you have ſent me, I have begun the famous negotiation for a maſs for Voltaire, at Berlin; and, though I can form no idea of the thing called an immortal ſoul, maſs ſhall be ſaid for his. The actors of this farce, with us, are better acquainted with money than good books. I therefore hope that the *jura ſtolæ* will be too ſtrong for ſcruples of conſcience.

A French mathematician has emphatically written to me that he has diſcovered the ſquaring of the circle, and that he has incited the jealouſy of all Europe! As far as I underſtand ſuch matters, the thing is impoſſible, becauſe of the inequality of the ſections of the circle; and, ſhould his calculation even be a nearer approach than thoſe of his predeceſſors, the diſcovery would ſtill be uſeleſs. Theſe high ſciences are

only

only ſo far uſeful to ſociety as they may be applied to aſtronomy, mechanics, and hydroſtatics; in other reſpects, they are but luxury of mind.

We have here a mechanic of real genius. His name is Hermite, a man fruitful in ingenious and uſeful inventions. He wants nothing but celebrity. His ſimplicity and modeſty enhance his merit as much as does his knowledge. Could all the talents which nature delights in diſtributing, at a venture, be diſcovered in any country, and each talent in its kind employed, that country would ſoon become the firſt in Europe. But how much ſagacity, what infinite aſſiduity, and patience, are requiſite for ſuch diſcoveries! Fate has reſerved the guidance of man to herſelf; and, after mature examination, we ſhall find we have leſs part in the affair than our pride attributes to itſelf.

I now come to the buſt of Voltaire, which I beg you will not ſend before the month of September, when all expences ſhall be punctually paid. The letter you have written to Catt has given me much pleaſure. I refer you to the anſwer which you will receive from him. We have no time to loſe at our age. We muſt be quick in meeting in this world, or appoint a meeting in the valley of Jehoſaphat; and you know what happens there.

In leſs than a month, death has carried off ſeveral diſtinguiſhed and well known perſons, in our parts. The princeſs of Pruſſia, her brother the duke of Wirtemberg, the electreſs dowager of Saxony, the prince and princeſs Hatzfeld, and the prince of Mansfeld with his ſon. A deſtructive and bloody battle would not have ſwept away more at a time. If therefore an old man of ſeventy be in haſte to ſee you, do not wonder; it is that he may, before he die, aſſure you of the eſteem he has for you, and for your genius.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CXCII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, June 8, 1780.

I HAVE written the unfortunate and wearisome narrative of my phyſical and mental ſituation to M. de Catt, of which he will render an account to your majeſty. But he cannot expreſs my profound grief, at being unable to come and lay all the ſentiments at your majeſty's feet which I owe you, and have vowed to preſerve

preſerve till death. At leaſt he cannot expreſs them as they are felt by me. Though my pain of body and mind is not ſo great as that which your majeſty has ſo often felt, and which you have reſiſted with ſuch heroic fortitude and patience, I ſtill have need, feeble and frail as is my machine, of a part of this fortitude, overwhelmed as I am with affliction, at being unable to undertake a journey which I am more than ever deſirous to undertake, and which is more than ever neceſſary to my depreſſed and withered faculties. With ſorrow I reſign myſelf to my fate, and add this new chagrin to the liſt of thoſe which I have before ſo often experienced in this beſt of poſſible worlds. Why am I deprived, by a painful and dangerous indiſpoſition, of the ſweet conſolation of bringing to your majeſty, not only my tender veneration, my profound gratitude, and my more than ever ardent admiration, but, the attachment and reſpect of all France, of which I wiſh you could be a witneſs?

Theſe ſentiments will ſtill increaſe, ſhould it be known here that your majeſty has paid all funeral honours to the great man to whom they have, ſo unworthily, been refuſed, by our prieſts. It is exceedingly ſtrange that our government ſhould ſuffer an act ſo infamous, or ſhould per-

mit thoſe fanatics to blaſt, as much as is in them, the laurels of men who have rendered the nation moſt illuſtrious! From the hope which your majeſty has been pleaſed to inſpire, I flatter myſelf that, on the 30th of May laſt, the anniverſary of the death of this great man who has now been two years departed, a ſolemn ſervice was celebrated, in a manner worthy of the hero and the philoſopher who has iſſued his orders, and paid the expences!

We have at preſent here an aſſembly of the clergy, from whom M. Necker, our Sully and Colbert, is preparing to demand much money, which they muſt be obliged to grant. They will be highly irritated by the ſervice for Voltaire; and I flatter myſelf it is the intention of your majeſty that ſo they ſhould be. I will not ſpare them any of the circumſtances which may humble their pride and fanaticiſm.

We are here in moſt impatient expectation of the ſucceſs of this third campaign; eſpecially in America. The inſolence and piracy of the Engliſh have offended every nation in Europe. The declaration lately made by the empreſs of Ruſſia has been ſatisfactory to all Frenchmen; and all Frenchmen are perſuaded your majeſty has been very active, in this noble and firm ſtep taken by Ruſſia. It is with pleaſure ſeen that

theſe inſolent Engliſh, who reſpect nothing, ſtill however reſpect your majeſty's flag. But no one is ſurpriſed that they ſhould diſtinguiſh and fear your majeſty, who, during a reign of forty years, have done every thing that was requiſite to make yourſelf reſpected, both by friends and enemies. All France with pleaſure beholds the former ſyſtem of alliance and union acquiring force. Our friendſhip increaſes with our moſt natural ally, who is the moſt potent, the moſt reſpectable ally we poſſeſs. With this confidence, we are little alarmed by the interview which the emperor and the empreſs of Ruſſia are to have, at Mohilow. We flatter ourſelves it will not diſturb the peace of Europe, which is in ſuch great need of repoſe; and Europe will be indebted to your majeſty for this new benefit.

I hope your majeſty will have the buſt of Voltaire toward the end of September, or the beginning of October. It would have been begun, but for the difficulty which has ariſen, with the ſculptor and with me likewiſe, relative to the coſtume of the head. I will not weary your majeſty with theſe trifles; M. de Catt will inform you of them, and will remit me your commands. As ſoon as they arrive, the ſtatuary will work unceaſingly. I dare anſwer your majeſty will be

be exceedingly well ſatisfied, both with the workmanſhip and the likeneſs.

A new edition is preparing of the works of a man ſo illuſtrious, and ſo ineſtimable to literature and reaſon. It will be elegantly printed, and prodigiouſly enriched; though, as your majeſty may well imagine, it will be printed in a foreign country; thanks to the clamours of the French fanatics, the perpetual ſcourge of all knowledge, and all worth. It is farther aſſerted, the edition will be carefully edited, by men of merit, to whom the memory and the works of Voltaire are dear. It ought, ſire, to be printed at Berlin, under the auſpices of your majeſty; that, in the ſame frontiſpiece, might be read the names of the two moſt illuſtrious men of the age.

I am, &c.

LETTER CXCIII.

From the King.

June 22, 1780.

WE imagined, one minute after another, we ſhould have ſeen you arrive when I received your letter. Though it gave me pleaſure,

ſure, it was a pleaſure unequal to the ſatisfaction of ſeeing you in perſon. The reaſons however which have prevented you from undertaking the journey are ſo unanſwerable that I am obliged to ſubmit. By what fatality ſhould the gravel happen to burrow in the reins of a philoſopher? Could it not take up its lodging in the body of a Sorbonniſt, a fanatic, a capuchin, or other animals of the like ſpecies? This diſeaſe is one of the moſt painful with which poor human nature is afflicted. I adviſe you to take the medicine of Mrs. Stevens. Many people here have found eaſe from it; and, though the Engliſh are at war with the French, I imagine a Frenchman may calculate with Newton, think with Locke, and take phyſic with Mrs. Stevens.

My ſentence then is pronounced, my dear Anaxagoras, and I ſhall never meet you more, till we come to the valley of Jehoſaphat, if ſuch valley there be.

I am your pledge that Voltaire is no longer in purgatory; public ſervice having been celebrated, for the repoſe of his ſoul, in the catholic church of Berlin. The French Virgil ought at preſent to be ſhining in reſplendent glory; nor can theologic hatred prevent him walking in the Elyſian fields, in the company of Socrates, Homer,

mer, Virgil, and Lucretius; leaning on the ſhoulders of Bayle and Montagne, and caſting a diſtant glance toward the popes, cardinals, perſecutors and fanatics, who are ſuffering, in Tartarus, the pains of Ixion, Tantalus, Prometheus, and all the other famous culprits of antiquity. Had the keys of purgatory been committed ſolely to your French biſhops, all hope for poor Voltaire would have been over; but, by the aid of the paſſport which has been furniſhed (the maſſes ſaid for the repoſe of his ſoul) the locks fly open and he has eſcaped, in deſpite of Beaumont, Pompignan, and their whole crew.

You give me pleaſure, by informing me of the new edition which is preparing of the works of Voltaire. It were to be wiſhed that the editors would omit his too frequent ſallies on people like Nonotte, Patouillet, and other inſects of literature, whoſe names do not merit a place in theſe inimitable productions, which, worthy of poſterity, will endure as long and perhaps longer than the French monarchy. The writings of Virgil, Horace, and Cicero, have ſurvived the deſtruction of the capitol, and of Rome itſelf; they ſubſiſt and have been tranſlated into all languages, and will ſubſiſt, while

there ſhall be men in the world who think, read, and delight in knowledge.

Such will be the fate of the works of Voltaire. To him I make my morning oriſons; to him I ſay—Divine Voltaire, *Ora pro nobis!* Let but Calliope, Melpomene, or Urania, enlighten and inſpire me, and my ſaint will equal your Saint Denis. My ſaint, inſtead of troubling the world, aided oppreſſed innocence, as much as he had the power; and, more than once, put fanaticiſm to ſhame, and made judges bluſh at their iniquity! He would have reformed the world, could it have been reformed.

This ſhort ſpecimen, my dear Anaxagoras, of philoſophic freedom will enable you to judge of the little progreſs I make in my Sorbonne ſtudies, under the dictates of my doctor, whoſe time and trouble are loſt on me. Often does he groan in heart that he is unable to bring back the loſt ſheep to the fold of the church, there to ſhear and flay him; but this ſheep, like the Engliſh nation, has revolted and takes arms * againſt the impoſed yoke of tyranny.

At preſent, the French, Spaniſh, and Engliſh are acting on the bloody and tragical ſtage of Mars. I ſit in the pit, and behold them parry,

* *Se gendarme*—Conſidering he was a ſheep, he was the moſt valorous of his race. T.

and

and tilt at each other. The drama they act appears to me written in the taſte of Crebillon. The plot is ſo complicated that no man can divine the denouement. Wind is the main incident, in all tragedies the ſcene of which is the ſea; and I fear leſt, in ſome of his freaks, Æolus ſhould injure the ſucceſs of your good countrymen.

Had not the empreſs of Ruſſia long ſince ſignalized her reign, by her glorious exploits, her maritime code would have been ſufficient to render it immortal. She avenges Neptune, by reſtoring him his trident, which had been wreſted from him by uſurpation. She, like Louis XIV, might hang up a picture in her palace, repreſenting the legiſlatrix of the ocean dragging pirates, whom ſhe has had the wiſdom to enchain, after her triumphal car.

But all I have written, my dear D'Alembert, is unequal to the medicine of Mrs. Stevens. Conſult your phyſicians, and with their approbation take it. My prayers are that your gravel may diſſolve. May you enjoy the remainder of life in eaſe and peace!

On which I pray, &c.

P. S. I forgot to anſwer you relative to the buſt of Voltaire. Let us not inſult his country, by

by a dreſs in which he would not be known. Voltaire thought in Greek, but he wrote in French. We ſhould not diſfigure our cotemporaries, by beſtowing on them the habit of a nation at preſent ſunken, and degraded, under the tyranny of their Turkiſh conquerors.

LETTER CXCIV.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, July 24, 1780.

GREAT as was my grief, that I could not come and lay all the ſentiments with which my heart is penetrated at your majeſty's feet, the letter you have been pleaſed to honour me with has, if poſſible, augmented the deep affliction I felt. The kind enquiries of your majeſty, concerning my ſtate of health, excite in me the moſt lively gratitude. You propoſe an Engliſh remedy, which I ſhould willingly take, although we are at war with that nation, did I ſuppoſe it proper for me. But, beſide that it is ſaid to be offenſive to the ſtomach, and that in my crazy machine the ſtomach is little better than the veſica, it ſeems to be well determined, after conſultations having been held, that my diſeaſe is not

the ſtone; that it is a very different kind of *calculus*, ſuch as depends upon the heat of my blood, and eſpecially on that of the ſeaſon, for the heat of blood diminiſhes as the weather becomes colder, and during winter almoſt diſappears, but increaſes as the weather becomes warmer, and eſpecially when my loins are heated. The true remedies for this diſeaſe are bathing, a cooling regimen, reſt, and the precaution of not riding too far, nor too long in a carriage.

To this, with great regret, am I obliged to add the almoſt entire privation of labour, for which I am the more afflicted becauſe, having no intimate friendſhip, no ſocial intereſt, ſince the loſs I four years ago ſuffered, labour and ſtudy were become almoſt my only reſource. Thus, to my misfortune, I begin to be ſenſible of languor which, till now, was unknown to me; and this added to ſeveral ſubjects of diſſatisfaction, which I feel in my unfortunate country, make me more than ever deſirous of that change of place and objects of which, thanks to my diſeaſe, I am deprived. If I ever wiſhed to paſs ſome moments with your majeſty, I certainly ſhould wiſh it now, but for the afflicting reaſons by which I am prevented. And, as neither motives of affection nor pleaſure detain me here, your majeſty may be well aſſured I ſhould commit no

violence

violence on myſelf, by a deprivation of ſome months of the muddy waters of the Seine, our dull walks, and our no leſs dull theatres. Since however it is the will of Eſculapius, and fate, that ſo it ſhould be, I muſt ſubmit to my mournful doom. Afflicted as is my tender veneration for your majeſty, my ſelf-love perhaps finds ſome conſolation, from the fear that I ſhould appear to your majeſty much inferior to what I was, when you ſaw me ſeventeen years ago. Though, to ſay the truth, I am fallen from no ſtupendous height; but I feel that fallen I have, and that I am on the point of being quite laid low.

I weary your majeſty by this detail, and ſhall be better pleaſed to ſpeak of the pleaſure the funeral ſervice performed for Voltaire has given me. All people who love and revere his memory, that is to ſay all Paris, except perhaps the aſſembly of the clergy, have been delighted by the account they have heard of this pious and auguſt ceremony. We are well aſſured, at preſent, that Voltaire has at leaſt one foot in Paradiſe. Nothing more is wanting, to the honours of every kind which your majeſty has rendered him, except to erect a monument to his memory, in the church of Berlin, where he ſhould be repreſented proſtrate before the Eternal Father, and

treading Fanaticiſm in the duſt. The epigram would be excellent, and the ſtatuary Taſſart might execute the idea, under the direction and according to the plan of your majeſty.

The artiſt is at preſent at work on the buſt of this great man, in the French coſtume, according to your majeſty's deſire; and I hope it will be ready in two months, at the lateſt.

I have added a ſhort poem, which a Flemiſh poet, little known, but a zealous admirer of that illuſtrious writer, has entreated me to lay before your majeſty; a homage which he thought himſelf indebted to your majeſty, for your regret at the loſs of a great man whom, while living, you honoured with your bounty, and when dead with your eulogium.

M. de Catt will remit to your majeſty a new memorial, and authentic certificates, in favour of the poor curate of Neufchâtel, who is perſecuted by his fanatic biſhop. Your majeſty will be pleaſed to make yourſelf maſter of the circumſtances, and to obtain juſtice for this poor devil of a prieſt, who has long petitioned and requeſted it at your hands.

May the deſtiny which embitters my days prolong thoſe of your majeſty at my expence, and afford you many years of health, repoſe, and glory! Alas! poor France will ſoon have need

need of the ſecond, when this wretched and fooliſh war ſhall be concluded, which event does not ſeem as if it would happen ſoon.

I am, with the moſt lively gratitude, and the moſt tender veneration, &c.

LETTER CXCV.*

From the King.

Undated.

THERE is a melancholy gloom predominant in your letter, which inſpires pain. It ſeems you have equal reaſon to complain of your conſtitution and of fortune. We are old men, who are almoſt at the end of our journey; we ought therefore to endeavour to be cheerful, during the remainder of the road. Were we immortal, we might be indulged in ſorrow for afflictions; but life is too ſhort for us rationally to allow ourſelves to fix too high a value on things which ſoon muſt eternally vaniſh. You tell me, my dear Anaxagoras, that you have loſt the energy you poſſeſſed in the year 1763. I have done the ſame. Age is doomed to decay. I forget names; the vigour of my mind is enfeebled; my legs are diſordered; my ſight is

* This letter is number CLXXIII. in the Baſil edition. T.

bad; and vexations aſſault me as they do others. Yet does not this ſtring of infirmities and diſagreeable things prevent me from being cheerful. I ſhall ſmile when the earth is thrown upon my coffin. Endeavour therefore to caſt off whatever may trouble your peace of mind. Recollect that life is but a dream, and that this dream ends with exiſtence.

I perceive, with grief, I muſt renounce the pleaſure of once more ſeeing you; and our converſation muſt be confined to committing our thoughts to paper. This however will be better than nothing; you will paint your ideas in black and white, and I ſhall profit by your thoughts.

I now come to the apotheoſis of Voltaire, whom a prieſt has relieved from purgatory, without knowing what he did. The catholic church, at Berlin, is but little ſuitable to the cenotaph which you propoſe ſhould be erected to his memory. This church is built after the model of the Pantheon at Rome; nor can ſuch a mauſoleum be placed in it without diſfiguring the building. But, in revenge, Voltaire will have his buſt placed in the academy, where he will be more at his eaſe than in company with your god-makers, and your theophagi*, who

* God-eaters. T.

would take offence at the ſight; eſpecially ſhould the ſtatue, by ſome miracle, be animated, and ſuffer an epigram to eſcape.

There are fine lines in the ode you have ſent. The ſtanzas are ſome of them highly harmonious, but others of them are confuſed in their meaning, which defect the author may eaſily remove.

I have ſeen one M. Deliſle, on his paſſage to Ruſſia with the prince de Ligne, who ſpoke to me very much concerning Voltaire, and pretends he was preſent with him *in articulo mortis*. I wiſh he could have raiſed him from the dead. I believe I have ſaid, and I fear with reaſon, the grave of Voltaire will be the grave of the fine arts. He has cloſed the dignified age of Louis XIV. and we now enter the age of Seneca, Pliny, and Quintilian. We quit the world with leſs regret during a ſeaſon of dearth than in times of abundance; and this ought to render our laſt moments leſs diſagreeable, becauſe we are no longer attached to that which we muſt leave. Follow my advice, my dear Anaxagoras; bind your temples with garlands of roſes; make merry, and reſign yourſelf into the arms of deſtiny. May the reſignation be fortunate, and may good health be yours!

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CXCVI.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, September 15, 1780.

THE intereſt which your majeſty kindly takes in my melancholy ſituation, bodily and mental, penetrates to the very bottom of my heart. Your bounty, the effects of which I ſo long have felt, is expreſſed with ſo much ſenſibility, in the laſt letter you have done me the honour to write, that I have but one regret and one fear, at preſent; which is that I have intruded too long, with my ſufferings, on the great and important affairs by which you are occupied. One thing only can excuſe my indiſcretion, which is that the kindneſs of your majeſty is at preſent my only conſolation, my ſole reſource.

You kindly propoſe I ſhould follow your example; you exhort me to imitate your cheerfulneſs and philoſophy; which you poſſeſs in deſpite of age, that enfeebles your organs, and the cares and vexations that ſurround a throne. I know, ſire, no claſs of men is exempt from ſuffering; but I likewiſe know that there are privileged beings, ſuch as your majeſty, to whom nature and deſtiny grant alleviating plea-

ſures,

ſures, ſuch as are denied to other men. I, ſire, am no better than a poor mathematician and man of letters; with ſome good, ſome indifferent qualities; at once ſuffering in reins and ſtomach, and under the decay of corporal and intellectual faculties; add to which the impoſſibility of charming away my cares by labour. I have not, for my conſolation, the advantage to be either the greateſt captain, the greateſt king, the greateſt and trueſt philoſopher of the age, the protector of Germany, the reformer of the laws, or, in fine, the example of ſovereigns and men of letters. With ſuch comforts life may be ſupported; though, to a being like me, it is ſometimes painful, ſometimes inſipid, but never the ſource of pleaſure.

I perceive again too late that I have ſpoken of little but myſelf, of whom I ſpoke too much in my laſt letter. I humbly aſk pardon of your majeſty, and paſs to an object more intereſting to both you and me, to that great man whoſe memory your majeſty has ſo eloquently and worthily honoured.

You think, ſire, that the form of the church of Berlin is but little adapted to the monument which I have had the honour to propoſe. Permit me to obſerve to you that the church is ſaid to be built after the model of the Pantheon at Rome;

Rome; otherwiſe called, by a happy change of name, Our Lady of the Rotunda. Now Raphael is interred in that church, and a monument is erected to him, the form and dimenſions of which your majeſty might eaſily procure. You might therefore erect a ſimilar one at Berlin, to the Raphael of French literature; and this would, it appears to me, be an additional beauty to the church; and to your majeſty, as the protector of genius even after death, a new monument of grandeur and glory.

While in expectation of a monument ſo precious to letters and philoſophy, of which I ſtill venture not to deſpair, the artiſt is very ſeriouſly, and without delay, at work on the marble buſt, agreeable to your majeſty's orders in the French coſtume, the reſemblance of which is perfect. I know not whether your majeſty deſign this buſt for your cabinet, or for the academy. If you wiſh to have a ſecond, let me entreat you to ſend me your commands. You may perhaps be ſatisfied with the original for your cabinet, which ſeemed to me to be your firſt intention, and may afterward cauſe your ſculptor, Taſſart, to make an exact copy of this buſt for the academy at Berlin. Be it as it may, as ſoon as the work ſhall be finiſhed, which I imagine will be in a ſhort time, I will ſend advice

vice of it to your majeſty, and take the moſt certain and expeditious means of conveying it to you with ſafety.

My health is for the moment better, ſince the dreadful and obſtinate heats which we have for a month endured have ceaſed; but it is in general ſo uncertain, ſo wavering, that I dare not any longer entertain projects of travelling. I ſee myſelf reduced to vegetate, and languiſh, in an unfortunate country, where letters are more degraded, more oppreſſed, and more perſecuted than ever; where the prieſts are deſpiſed, yet potent; where genius is inſulted, during life and after death; where, in a word, nothing could at preſent detain me, except the extreme danger of change of place. How great would be my conſolation, nay my pleaſure, to depoſit all my griefs in the boſom of your majeſty, with a detail of the wrongs done to reaſon and juſtice, in France. Let me entreat you ſtill to preſerve the ſame bounty which ſo long has conſtituted my glory and my felicity, and which is at preſent my only conſolation and reſource.

I am, with the moſt profound, the moſt tender veneration, &c.

LET-

LETTER CXCVII.

From the King.

October 2, 1780.

I AM very ſorry that your ſtate of health is ſo bad as to deprive me of the hope of ever ſeeing you more. I flattered myſelf your malady was only temporary, and not attended by conſequences ſo ſerious. We are reduced therefore to appoint a rendezvous at the valley of Jehoſaphat, where ſome aſcetic devotees pretend there is much amuſement. Perhaps I there ſhall learn the ſubject of your complaints and diſſatisfaction, of which I am the more ignorant becauſe I have not heard that you at preſent meet with the leaſt perſecution. Europe ſuppoſes you as happy as a philoſopher can be. I am well informed that it is cuſtomary, with prieſts, to treat the dead bodies of philoſophers with indignity, at which I imagined philoſophers laughed. We need but give putrefaction time to act, and it will ſo peſtiferate the defunct that the living will ſoon be obliged to grant interment; and I dare venture to hope that it is indifferent, to philoſophers, in what ground the caprice of men ſhall aſſign them a ſepulchre.

I know not whether letters are deſpiſed or honoured

noured in France, but I perceive a dearth of genius. The thrones of literature become vacant for want of ſucceſſors, and all Europe feels a ſcarcity of great men.

I come to Voltaire, to whom you appoint a cenotaph in the catholic church of Berlin. I do not think he would be pleaſed with his ſituation. It will be better to place his buſt in the academy, where there is no ſuperſtition to tread under foot, and where the memory of a great man, who added ſo many talents to ſo much genius, may ſerve as an encouragement to men of letters, and incite them to deſerve a like ſuffrage from poſterity.

We are both old; let us reſt ſatisfied with having ſeen the glory of an age which did honour to the human mind, and to which you have contributed. To the ſplendid days, during which Cicero, Virgil, and Horace flouriſhed, ſucceeded the times of Seneca and Pliny; and to theſe barbariſm. After the degradation of the human mind came the renovation of the ſciences. Let viciſſitude have its reign, and let us bleſs Heaven we came into the world in good times, and have been the cotemporaries of men of talents and genius. With reſpect to prieſts, they will remain incorrigible till the whole race be extirpated.

pated. I hope to hear better news of your health.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CXCVIII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, November 3, 1780.

IT is now, this day, November the third, exactly twenty years ſince your majeſty was covered with glory, in the plains of Torgau, by wreſting that victory from the Auſtrians which they flattered themſelves they had carried. To this your majeſty has ſince added the glory of being the pacificator and avenger of Germany, the reformer of laws in your own ſtates, and in Europe the model of warriors and of kings. How great is the diſtance, as Terence has ſaid, between man and man! And with what ſorrowful conviction does this come home to my mind, when I approach, for I dare not ſay compare myſelf to, your majeſty. The little ſtrength I had twenty years ago, in my corporal, intellectual, and moral faculties, has almoſt totally diſappeared. The only energy that remains is in the

the profound ſentiment which attaches me to your majeſty; while you ſtill preſerve, in all their vigour, the rare qualities which have rendered you ſo reſpectable to Europe, during forty years that you have ſat upon the throne. You even preſerve your cheerfulneſs, as I with rapture perceive in the laſt letter you did me the honour to write. You laugh, with reaſon, at the follies of men; at which I ſhould do well to laugh alſo, and at which I certainly ſhould laugh like you, did I digeſt and ſleep better. The pleaſure I took in labour was formerly my ſupport, my every thing; fatigued as I am by an hour's application, I no longer have that reſource, and gloom comes over me. I do not indeed endure any great pain either of body or mind, but I am in that languid ſtate of both which renders man wholly inſenſible. Nature formed mine a feeble frame; whereas ſhe gave your majeſty nerves proportionate to the vigour and extent of your genius.

The ſculptor, whom I often viſit, that I may haſten him, promiſes me he will very ſoon have finiſhed the buſt of Voltaire, with which I hope your majeſty will be perfectly ſatisfied. Since your majeſty ſo thinks proper, we muſt renounce ſeeing his ſtatue in the church of Berlin, treading Superſtition and Fanaticiſm under foot. I own,

own, ſire, I regret the want of ſuch a monument; eſpecially when I recollect it would have been erected by command of your majeſty, and would have retraced, to the memory of future ages, the honours which Auguſtus rendered Virgil.

Would your majeſty believe that they refuſe, here, to permit his family to erect a very modeſt mauſoleum, to his memory, in the obſcure little country church where he is buried? It is even ſaid the prieſts have ſecretly dug up his body, to caſt it on the dunghill. There is no great harm in that, either to himſelf or thoſe who are intereſted in his memory; but it would be ſtrange if government, not loving though it fears the prieſts, ſhould have conſented to ſuch an indignity; nor can I believe it has conſented.

Theſe prieſts, whom your majeſty contemns becauſe you have nothing to fear from them, have powerful protectors here, and oppoſe the progreſs of reaſon and knowledge with increaſing fury. A work, the ſubject of which is moſt indifferent, to that vermin, muſt not ſee the day, unleſs permitted by them, or their hirelings; ſome of whom, by the aid of hunger and meanneſs, they procure among men of letters. Such inquiſition confines and freezes every mind; the abuſe which the pulpit vomits againſt reaſon,

and

and its defenders, abuſe which is ſupported by imbecile or fanatic magiſtrates, completes the degradation and diſcouragement of every thing moſt enlightened, and moſt eſtimable, in the nation.

I ſpeak not of this misfortune as it relates to myſelf; I am rather a ſpectator than a ſlave in the galley, in which I ſtand with folded arms, well determined never more to print; or, if ever, it ſhall be in a country where truth may freely expreſs itſelf, without offence to the king, the adminiſtration, the morals, or the honour of any man. But I ſee ſo many men of letters ſuffering under this perſecution, this abominable inquiſition, that I cannot forbear to pity, though I cannot partake their pains; nearly as an old lover is intereſted in the fate of a woman whom he once tenderly loved.

Happy, ſire, are the men who, like you, can command opinion, ſafely contemn knaves and fools, inſtruct their ſpecies without the fear of fanaticiſm, and oblige them, even in their own deſpite, to be tolerant, moderate, and rational. May you, ſire, long afford men leſſons, laws, and examples like theſe!

I am, with the moſt profound and the moſt tender veneration, &c.

LETTER CXCIX.

From the King.

Undated.*

MANY men have won battles, and conquered provinces; but few have written a work ſo perfect as the preface to the *Encyclopedie*. As it is a rare thing juſtly to appreciate all human learning, and a more common one to put thoſe to flight who previouſly were in fear, I think, after ſumming up votes, the labours of the philoſopher muſt be adjudged ſuperior to thoſe of the general. If we conſider each according to their utility, extenſive and correct knowledge is preſerved for ever, and tranſmitted in books to the moſt diſtant poſterity; whereas the temporary ſucceſs of war, by which only a few people, in a ſmall corner of Europe, are intereſted, is forgotten as ſoon as acquired. So much for the philoſopher and the warrior.

I now come to the nerves; and that yours and mine may be comparatively judged of, I propoſe that ſome able ſurgeon ſhould diſſect us both. Let us wait with a little patience and then

* This letter, in the Baſil edition, is number CLXXVIII. Its contents ſhew where it ought to be placed. T.

theſe

theſe gentlemen may diſcuſs, moſt profoundly, on the nervous ſyſtem of the French philoſopher and the Teutonic ſoldier. I foreſee they will affirm that the fineſt nerves, and thoſe that vibrate moſt eaſily, compoſe feeble conſtitutions, and ductile minds; and that the more robuſt nerves are proper only for porters, gladiators, and plowmen. Be comforted, therefore, my dear Anaxagoras, for your ſmall ſhare of health, ſince yours is the better part; for the advantages of mind are, in every ſenſe, preferable to thoſe of body. You have only one generous effort to make that you may baniſh all gloomy ſenſations, by which your ideas are clouded. Even when we loſe that firſt ardour of youth which often is impetuous, we ought moſt carefully to preſerve a certain fund of cheerfulneſs, which, with the aid of hope, may enable us to bear the load of life.

Though tonſured and mitred heads make new efforts to extend their mental tyranny, you are ſupplied with the arms of ridicule; and the darts of ſatire, ſharpened by wit, will overthrow the pontiff and the idol of fanaticiſm at one and the ſame ſhock. Your bigotted enemies wiſh philoſophers ſhould weep; laugh, and they will be confounded. If you will enrol me among your light troops, I make you an offer of my very

humble ſervices, and will merrily attack the Sorbonne in a body; your Beaumont, archbiſhop by the wrath inſtead of the grace of God; your Braſchi* of Monte Cavallo; and more ſtill ſhould the intereſts of the military aſſociation ſo demand. This is all I can do; and, as gooſe-quills are our weapons, which no man in our countries can prevent us from handling, and as our preſſes groan for a ſupply of nonſenſe, you need but aſſign me my taſk; to fulfil it ſhall be my endeavour.

What you tell me relative to the unworthy treatment of the corpſe of Voltaire, by your monks, excites me to take vengeance on the raſcals who dare thus to exerciſe their impotent rage, againſt the fineſt genius France ever produced. I beg you to ſend me the buſt of that rare and ſingular man. His effigies ſhall be placed in our ſanctuary of the ſciences, where he may take up his abode; whereas, ſhould we aſſign him reſidence in the church, his ſhade would take offence: not to mention the dangers to which his ſtatue would be expoſed after my death, when perhaps falſe zeal would lead ſome prieſt, flaming with fanaticiſm, to mutilate or break the image of the apoſtle of toleration †.

* The Pope. T.

† A late edict, dated Potſdam, July 9, 1788, in which, though

I now return to the beginning of your letter, in which the queſtion was our nerves, to inform you that I have had the gout four weeks ſucceſſively; that I have ſuffered much; and that, by the aid of regimen, I have expelled the maraſmus and the malady. My fingers are not benumbed; and, if prieſts be brought in queſtion, I ſhall, aided by ink, overflow them with my heretical gall. Courage, my dear Anaxagoras; collect your ſtrength, renovate your good humour, or raiſe it from the dead!

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CC.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, December 15, 1780.

The anniverſary of the battle of Keſſelſdorf.

EACH letter, with which your majeſty honours me, awakens in me thoſe ſentiments of gratitude, veneration, and tenderneſs, with

though every man be allowed to *think* as he pleaſe, he is forbidden to *communicate* his thoughts, and in which the ſuppoſed increaſe of impiety in Pruſſia, with indirect alluſions to the late reign, are declaimed againſt, render it probable that [illegible]eric here foreſaw what really would have happened. T.

which I have ſo long been penetrated. But, however profound theſe are in me, there are others by which I am at preſent occupied. One more dear, if poſſible, at preſent employs my whole ſoul; for it relates more immediately to your majeſty, and originates in the news we have received of the death of the empreſs queen. This intelligence, intereſting at all times, appears particularly ſo at preſent, from the effects which may be the conſequences. It is known, or believed, that the empreſs loved peace, at leaſt toward the end of her life; and to this inclination, ſupported by your majeſty's arms, Europe is indebted for the peace of Teſchen. Men fear this propenſity, ſo praiſe-worthy and ſo deſirable in a prince, is not at preſent to be found at the court of Vienna, and that Europe will ſoon be plunged into new wars. Should ſuch a misfortune follow, it would be impoſſible for your majeſty to refrain taking up arms; and I dread leſt new fatigues, and new labours, ſhould injure your majeſty's health. I am not, ſire, diſturbed concerning your glory, but infinitely in behalf of your repoſe and preſervation. You have no need of renown; for what can be added to that which, during a ſpace of forty years, has been ſaid of you? But you have great need to lead a mild and tranquil life, and

ſtill long to enjoy the love of your people, the admiration of Europe, and the homage of all thinking men.

An humble and obſcure philoſopher has not the temerity to ruſh into the councils of princes, and inquire into their ſecrets; but he may be permitted to tremble for the life of thoſe whom he loves and reveres. I aſk pardon of your majeſty for this expanſion of heart, which ſeems like an intention to penetrate ſecrets and political myſteries; but it was what I could not refuſe this heart of mine, and your majeſty cannot be angry that I am ſo much occupied in thinking on you. On you, ſire, the eyes of Europe are at preſent fixed; ſhe regards you as her tutelary deity, and exclaims——"Strengthen the "peace you have ſo gloriouſly beſtowed!"—France participates theſe ſentiments. What would become of her, if a continental war were to be added to that in which ſhe is already engaged, by ſea?

I have but too much wearied your majeſty, by a ſubject on which I find it difficult to be ſilent. I ſhall therefore paſs to things of leſs importance, and conſequently things that diſturb me leſs.

The buſt of Voltaire is finiſhed, agreeable to your majeſty's deſire. The artiſt has exerted

his utmoſt attention. It will this week be packed up, with all poſſible precaution, and will arrive ſafe and ſound at Berlin.

You lay a ſnare, ſire, for my vanity, but into which I ſhall not fall. You compare the preface to the *Encyclopedie* to all you have effected of great and memorable, in peace and war, in politics, in government, and letters themſelves; though the laſt have only been your recreation. But how far am I from ſucceſs like this; and how little worthy of ſuch renown! How great even is the difference between our corporal powers! You, ſire, who are four years older than I am, have reſiſted fatigues, and ſhocks, by which my poor frame would immediately have been crumbled to duſt. I ſhould ſink under the hundred thouſandth part of what your majeſty performs in a ſingle day. You have all Europe upon your mind; while a page of bad proſe, or a few lines of calculation, make me, a paltry ſcribbler, feel how much I am fallen from the little I was; although the height is aſſuredly not great. To render the evil as light as poſſible, it is eſſential to be reſigned to the will of fate; to liſten to the voice of nature, and to huſband her powers; to oppoſe her irregularities by regimen, and her weakneſs by reſt, that I may drag on my few remaining days with as

little

little pain as poſſible. This, well or ill, it ſhall be my endeavour to effect.

Your majeſty will receive this letter about the beginning of the coming year, which will be the forty-firſt of your reign; a reign that will furniſh ſo many fine traits to hiſtory, ſo many examples to ſovereigns, ſo many leſſons to generals and politicians, and ſo much admiration to ſages. May its ſplendid duration be lengthened; and may I, when called to Elyſium or to Tartarus, leave your majeſty behind! In fine, may I, while a ſingle breath ſhall remain, more and more convince you of the tender and profound veneration with which I ſhall, to the laſt ſigh, &c.

LETTER CCI.

From the King.

January 16, 1781.

I BELIEVE the beſt conſequences that can be drawn from philoſophy are ſuch as will render life ſupportable; and that nothing makes exiſtence more agreeable than a certain tranquillity of ſoul, which baniſhes thoſe cares, and gloomy ideas, by which it is diſturbed. This

I would

I would prove, could I perſuade myſelf that an ignorant perſon, of my ſtamp, could ſhed ſerenity over the mind of a great philoſopher; that is, over the mind of our modern Anaxagoras. But I think it more probable that this great philoſopher ſhould be ſelf-determined to recover that decent cheerfulneſs which is the characteriſtic attribute of the French. For my part, I approach the ſtate of inanity to which age conducts all dotards. I ſee thoſe born and die whoſe turn it is to enter, or to leave, the world; I ſee but am not diſturbed.

I have notwithſtanding regretted the death of the empreſs queen. She was an honour to the throne, and to her ſex. I have made war on her, yet never was her enemy. The ſon of that great woman, the emperor, I have ſeen, and he appears to me too enlightened to be precipitate in his plans. I eſteem but do not fear him; and, with reſpect to poſſible contingencies, it appears to me that mathematicians, who can ſubject them to calculation, are better able to penetrate the future than the men whom we call politicians, who often do not ſee to the end of their noſe. That being ſo, you will make a greater progreſs with three curves than I with my vain conjectures, which do not approach the certainty of calculation. Were a general congreſs of the

ſovereigns

ſovereigns of Europe aſſembled, I ſhould certainly give it as my opinion that peace and harmony ought to reign among the whole. The ifs, however, on this ſubject would be infinite. The moſt certain mode, in ſuch circumſtances, is to abandon ourſelves to the decrees of deſtiny, concerning what ſhall hereafter happen; and, when theſe decrees come, to receive them with entire reſignation.

To afford you a proof of my tranquillity, I ſend you a ſmall pamphlet, which tends to point out the defects of German literature, and indicate the means of improvement. Colonel Grimm, who is a German, can inform you of every thing that relates to a language which you have not ſtudied, and which hitherto has not deſerved the trouble of learning. For a language does not deſerve to be ſtudied, till good authors have firſt rendered it famous; and of theſe we are entirely deſtitute. They will perhaps appear, when I ſhall be walking in the Elyſian fields, where I ſhall preſent to the Mantuan ſwan the idylles of a German named Geſner, and the fables of Gellert. You will laugh at the trouble I have taken, to infuſe into a nation whoſe knowledge, hitherto, has conſiſted in eating, drinking, making love and fighting, ideas of good taſte and Attic ſalt. Still I have a wiſh to be uſeful; and

a grain thrown into fertile land often ſprouts, and becomes unexpectedly productive.

May the enſuing year be as fruitful in favourable incidents to you, and philoſophy, as I wiſh! May you long occupy the chair of reaſon, from which you inſtruct the Gauls! Such are the prayers I daily make, for the modern Anaxagoras.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CCII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, February 9, 1781.

I HAVE juſt received the excellent work, on German literature, which your majeſty has done me the honour to ſend, and which you mentioned in your letter of the ſixth of January. I ſent the copy to M. Grimm, which was deſtined for him, without delay, according to your majeſty's commands; nor did I loſe a moment again and again to read this new literary and philoſophic production of your majeſty. I there found the moſt ſound principles of literature, with a fund of reaſon and good taſte, ſuch as might be expected from a philoſophic writer, nurtured

nurtured by the ſtudy of good examples, and worthy to become himſelf an example.

I am not ſufficiently acquainted with German literature, to judge whether your majeſty's reproaches be or be not well founded; but I rely, without difficulty, on your enlightened judgment, concerning a ſubject on which I am ignorant. The juſt and true manner, in which you appreciate our French men of letters, perſuades me there is equal juſtice in your eſtimate of the men of letters of your own country; and the means you propoſe, to remedy the difficulties you bewail, appear to me the moſt ſane and uſeful. Not but it is ſaid that the Germans complain of having been cenſured with too much rigor. This appears to me natural enough; but it is no proof that there is reaſon in their complaints.

I have diſcovered but one paſſage, in all this excellent work, which is liable to criticiſm, and which would in certain reſpects be ill founded. Your majeſty ſays, in the thirty-ſixth page, we will cite, among the Latin writers, the Manual of Epictetus and the Thoughts of Marcus Aurelius. You no doubt mean only to ſpeak of the tranſlations of theſe two works, which indeed were written at Rome, and which make them in ſome manner appertain to the Latin writers; but

but your majeſty is not ignorant that the originals of both are in Greek. In a ſecond edition, it will be well for your majeſty to explain yourſelf ſomething more preciſely, on that ſubject, to avoid all ambiguity, and take from the German journaliſts every pretext to make a dull commentary on it, as uſual.

Enough, ſire, on the Germans, notwithſtanding they have the honour to have you for their countryman and ſovereign. I haſten to another topic, not leſs worthy of praiſe perhaps than your excellent work. I mean the eloquence, the good taſte, and the dignity of the eulogium you made on the empreſs queen, in the laſt letter you did me the honour to write. I have read it to all my acquaintance, and all my acquaintance admired it as much as myſelf. All exclaimed this princeſs could not have a more beautiful funeral oration; and added that the few following words ought to be engraven upon her tomb—" Here lies Maria Thereſa, empreſs-" queen of Hungary and of Bohemia. The great " Frederic, her cotemporary, has ſaid of her—" *She was an honour to the throne, and to her ſex.* " *I made war upon her, yet never was her enemy.*"

We had a public aſſembly, on the twenty-fifth of January laſt, at the French Academy, for the admiſſion of two new members. The abbé

abbé Delille, who received them, and who in his diſcourſe introduced a word on the empreſs-queen, added, that he could not praiſe her with more eloquence than your majeſty: he then repeated your words, and the hall reſounded with applauſe. I have more than once had occaſion, in my diſcourſes before this body, to expreſs my ſentiments for your majeſty, and to ſpeak of your fame and your works, and the public have always joined chorus; for the public have that veneration for you which you merit as a warrior and a philoſopher.

I am informed, ſire, there is now at Berlin a young man of learning, named Mayer*, who has lately publiſhed an excellent hiſtory of Swiſſerland, in the German language, which hiſtory has been tranſlated into French. I am told it abounds in philoſophy and bold truths; that the author is able to write in French; that he deſires to fix his reſidence in Pruſſia; and that the academy would in him make an excellent acquiſition, ſhould your majeſty think proper to grant him the moderate penſion of four hundred crowns per annum, with which he would be ſatisfied, till by his labours he ſhould obtain higher re-

* The name is erroneouſly printed Muller, in both editions. T.

wards.

wards. Your majeſty may enquire concerning this man of letters; and, as I intereſt myſelf in the good of your academy, I take the liberty to requeſt your majeſty's favour in behalf of M. Mayer, ſhould you think him worthy to obtain it, after theſe enquiries have been made.

I have only room to renew the ardent wiſhes I inceſſantly make for your majeſty's happineſs, for the increaſe of your glory if that be poſſible, for your health, your repoſe, and your preſervation. I am informed, by letter, that your majeſty's health is better than ever, and I exclaim, with the ancient—"Then are the gods ſome-"times juſt!"

I am, with the moſt tender veneration, &c.

LETTER CCIII.

From the King.

February 24, 1781.

THE work I have ſent you is the work of a dilettante, who, taking part in the fame of his nation, is deſirous the progreſs in literature of that nation ſhould equal the progreſs of ſurrounding nations, which are ſome ages in advance. Far from being ſevere, I have chaſtiſed only with a rod of roſes. We ought not to inſpire

ſpire deſpair, when we wiſh to encourage; we ſhould, on the contrary, let thoſe whom we would rouſe from their lethargy perceive they are in poſſeſſion of talents, and only in want of the will to bring theſe talents to perfection. To this there can be no greater obſtacle than clowniſh pedantry, and want of taſte.

Genius, I own, is a thing leſs common than it is ſuppoſed. Men who would have performed miracles, of one kind, not having found their proper place, have not acted the ſame wonders of another. In the ſchools and univerſities of my country, I have introduced the method of inſtruction which I have propoſed; and I promiſe myſelf the conſequences will be advantageous.

I willingly ſign my own condemnation, reſpecting Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus. You know that the Latin language is much more general, in Germany, than the Greek. Would our men of letters but apply themſelves to tranſlate the ancients well, they would by this means infuſe more ſtrength and energy into their mother tongue, which qualities it ſtill wants.

You kindly intereſt yourſelf in my health; and, at the moment that you congratulate me on its good ſtate, your letter finds me in the third fit of the gout, with which I have been laid up,

ſince my return to Berlin. Theſe are acts of gallantry, with which age favours old men. But I comfort myſelf with the abbé de Chaulieu, and with all the gouty elders of the Old and New Teſtament. The diſeaſe incommodes me a little in holding my pen; but we habituate ourſelves to all things, and I exclaim with Poſidonius—O gout! Thou ſhalt not prevent me from writing to the ſage Anaxagoras.

M. Mayer has been here, and I own I found him a man of minutiæ. He has made inquiries concerning the Cimbri, and the Teutoni, for which I think myſelf under no obligations to him; and has further written an analyſis of univerſal hiſtory, in which he has ſtudiouſly repeated what had before been better ſaid. If men mean only to copy, books may be eternally increaſed; but the public would not be profited. Genius does not fix its attention on trifles; it either imagines things aſſuming new forms or yields to fancy; or, which is ſtill better, ſelects for itſelf new and intereſting ſubjects. But our Germans have the diſeaſe which is called λογων διαρρεα*, of which to cure them would be a taſk more difficult than to ſtrike them dumb. Here however are words enough for a gouty man; not

* A flux of words.

but

but I was in a good train to have beſtowed many more on you, had not my hand, perhaps very opportunely, ſtopped me ſhort, that I might not weary you.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CCIV.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, March 30, 1781.

THE laſt letter your majeſty did me the favour to write, left me alarmed, both for the preſent and the future. A perſon who had the honour to be preſent with your majeſty, for ſome time, wrote me word that he never had ſeen you in better health. I was eager to ſend my congratulations; and, while I and my friends were all rejoicing, for the good news, your majeſty was ſuffering the third violent fit of the gout, by which you had this winter been attacked. Though you have had the goodneſs to inform me you are entirely freed from it, I dread a relapſe, this accurſed long winter not being entirely concluded; eſpecially not at five degrees north of Paris; we here ſtill light our fires.

The more deeply I was affected, by your majeſty's illneſs, the more tenderly grateful am I for the bounty with which you have been pleaſed to ſpeak to me on the ſubject, and for aſſuring me that this infernal gout ſhall not deprive me of your letters. Theſe, ſire, are to me more than ever neceſſary; they are my only conſolation, and re-animate the inſipidity of my exiſtence, which was become little better than vegetation, by my ill ſtate of health. I am entirely deprived of all labour, if I mean to preſerve the ſmall remains of life that are left me.

But I would rather ſpeak of your majeſty than of myſelf; and, having in my laſt letter paid my reſpects to you concerning the eloquent though ſhort eulogium you wrote on the empreſs queen, I take the liberty to congratulate you, at preſent, on a different ſubject, on the excellent anſwer you lately returned, to the petition of the Lutheran miniſters of Berlin, relative to innovations made in the cathechiſm, and ſinging pſalms. If, on the one part, the importance which theſe prieſts annex to the ſubject of their petition be amuſing, by being ridiculous, the anſwer of your majeſty is, on the other, dictated by wiſdom itſelf, armed with the moſt refined and delicate ſatire—" My intention " is that each of my ſubjects ſhould regulate his " religious

" religious affairs as he ſhall think proper; and " that all, without exception, ſhould be free to " ſing and to believe how they pleaſe and what " they pleaſe." Oh, ſire, how would Voltaire have laughed, had he read this charming anſwer! What an excellent uſe would he have made of it, in the firſt pamphlet he ſhould have printed, whether in verſe or in proſe! How delightful, how proper is the expreſſion—" That " each ſhould regulate his religious affairs as he " ſhould think proper; and ſhould ſing and be- " lieve how he ſhould pleaſe and what he ſhould " pleaſe!" How worthy is it to become the example of monarchs, whom divines wiſh ſhould interfere in their quarrels; and who uſually do interfere, with facility ſo degrading to themſelves, and ſo fatal to their people! I dare aſſure your majeſty theſe expreſſions, ſo ineſtimable to reaſon, have made their fortune as effectually, here, as your excellent eulogium on the empreſs queen; and that they are at this moment repeated, with buſts of laughter, by all thinking men, who, after the example of your majeſty, contemn human ſuperſtitions, and theological blunders. May fate and the gout permit you, ſire, long to afford a like example to kings, of which moſt of them have ſo much need; conſolation ſo ſweet to reaſon and good

ſenſe; and equally efficacious marks of contempt, for abſurd and atrocious fanaticiſm!

All your majeſty has done me the honour to inform me of, relative to the preſent ſtate of German literature, is full of taſte and information. I wiſh and hope the reform, propoſed by your majeſty, may, by its ſucceſs, be worthy of the philoſophic and reforming hero by whom it has been preſcribed. Our univerſities in France, and particularly that of Paris, are in great need of a legiſlator like you; for they are ſtill deeply incruſted with prejudices of every kind, exceedingly ignorant and bigotted.

I depend entirely on your majeſty's judgment, in what relates to M. Mayer, of whom I had the honour to ſpeak. Wonders had been written to me of him, to which I gave faith ſufficiently implicit to aſk your majeſty how far you were acquainted with that man of letters. At preſent, I am well informed of his worth; and, exceedingly tranquil concerning the part which your majeſty may take, I willingly believe that German men of letters are ſtill very ill of the complaint which your majeſty ſo pleaſantly calls a flux of words. Were they to hear, or rather to liſten, more frequently and more attentively to your majeſty, they would learn from you to

ſay

ſay only what was proper; and to ſay this in a proper manner.

A precept ſo ſage reminds me it is time to end my philoſophic and literary prattle; which I conclude better than I began it, by renewing thoſe ſentiments of profound gratitude, veneration, and tenderneſs, for your majeſty, with which, to the tomb, I ſhall, &c.

LETTER CCV.

From the King.

April 13, 1781.

THE will of Nature is that health and hope ſhould introduce us to the world, to delude us concerning the evils which await us; and, by exceſs of precaution, this ſame Nature, fearing we ſhould be too much attached to the vile life ſhe beſtowed, ſends ſickneſs and infirmities, that we may renounce it with leſs regret. In this laſt claſs we are both included. We are each day ſuffering new loſſes, and ſending off our heavy baggage in the van, well aſſured that we are ſoon to follow. I have freed myſelf from the gout, with which I was incommoded by abſtinence and regimen. I now think no more

of it, though I prepare for ſome new viſit from this importunate gueſt. While France bravely makes war by ſea on the Engliſh, I have fought with the gout, which I have taken by famine. It were to be wiſhed the Spaniards could do as much by Gibralter.

We have had a trifling commotion in the church, concerning a ſubject of great importance. You know that the proteſtants believe the Deity is delighted by their ſinging; and I know not what German poet imagined he diſcovered a crowd of ridiculous things, in their fine ſongs; he therefore wrote new ones, more worthy as he imagined of the ſupreme Being. This was productive of a ſciſſion of the church; one party being for the old and the other for the new verſion. The people, without knowing why, exclaimed—Hereſy! The prieſts, jealous of, wiſhed to anathematiſe, each other. The bookſellers interfered; ſome of them had whole editions of the new verſion, which they wiſhed to ſell; others had their ſhops full of the old, of which they never would have rid themſelves, had the new been victorious.

In the heat of the conflict, the parties mutually appealed to me; and I, like an impartial judge, determined each ſhould praiſe God as he

he thought proper. Thus was peace re-eſtabliſhed in the church of Berlin.

Be pleaſed however to admire, while you behold an infidel made the unworthy inſtrument to appeaſe ſchiſm, which had taken birth in the flock of the elect! Plato formerly ſerved as the founder of the Chriſtian religion. Voltaire employed the whole ſagacity of his genius to render prieſts rational and tolerant; but the plan of the latter was too daring, and was not accompliſhed.

A pleaſant adventure has happened in the empire. A prince, a great friend to your Beaumont, archbiſhop of Paris, has a wife aged fifty-three. This prince became acquainted with a fanatic prieſt, who promiſed him his wife ſhould become pregnant, if they would but let maſs be ſaid upon her belly; adding, he muſt acquire faith of a very robuſt complexion, to render the charm efficacious. Maſs accordingly was ſo performed, and the wife of the prince imagined herſelf with child. Midwives, male and female, with witneſſes, were called in; but unfortunately the miracle failed, becauſe the prince had not ſufficient faith.

Pray take note that this farce has been acted in the preſent philoſophic age; in the eighteenth century; during which reaſon it is ſaid is brought to perfection. What poor creatures are we! It

ſhould

ſhould ſeem as if nature had ſent us into the world to believe and to commit follies. Still do we ſwell with pride. I wiſh you could be reſtored to health, and vigour, by having maſs ſaid upon your belly! But, as ſuch quackery is repugnant to philoſophy, you muſt confine yourſelf to regimen, which is more efficacious than maſs. I wiſh ſincerely to hear of your better health, and that you are able to work as formerly.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CCVI.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, May 11, 1781. The anniverſary of the battle of Fontenoy, which happened ten years before the treaty of Verſailles.

YOUR majeſty remarks, in the laſt letter you have done me the honour to write, that you and I daily ſuffer new loſſes, and that we ſend off our heavy baggage in the van, well aſſured we are ſoon to follow. As far as this relates to me, it is but too true; but, with reſpect to yourſelf, permit me to ſay, I am not of your opinion. Judging by your letters, I think on the contrary that

that you grow younger every day; ſo pleaſant and excellently humorous are they. Your majeſty's obſervations, on the quarrel of the miniſters of Berlin, are written in the very beſt taſte, worthy of the cauſe ſubmitted to your majeſty, and of the wiſdom of a great king. Alas, ſire, (and this is the reflection of all to whom I have read that paſſage in your letter) why have not other ſovereigns had, and why have they not yet, ſuch follies in equal contempt? How much blood, how much miſery, would they have ſpared the ſtupid and deplorable human race! Here have we a biſhop of Amiens, a bigot, the ſucceſſor of him who demanded the death of the chevalier de la Barre—here have we, I ſay, this biſhop of Amiens, Machault by name, the ſon of a former comptroller-general of finances, who has lately iſſued a frenetic mandate, againſt the edition which is preparing of the works of Voltaire. Had we the wit in France to impoſe ſilence upon theſe ringers of the alarm bell, they would have neither partiſans nor imitators. Perhaps the neceſſity of repreſſing them will at length be ſeen, for the honour of reaſon and the repoſe of the public. God grant your good example may be followed!

It ſeems the emperor is at preſent treating the prieſts, the monks, and the pope, in rather a cavalier

cavalier manner. It is to be hoped this firſt act of Imperial hoſtility will have more ſerious conſequences. Amen. So be it.

I am, with the moſt tender and profound veneration, &c,

LETTER CCVII.

From the King.

May 28, 1781.

HE who is on the verge of his ſeventieth year ought to be ready to decamp, whenever the trumpet ſhall ſound to horſe. Having lived long, we become acquainted with the inſignificance of mundane affairs; and, wearied by the ebb and flow of good and evil, which inceſſantly ſucceed each other, we cannot but quit life without regret. When we have not what was formerly called the hypochondria, and which is at preſent more elegantly entitled the vapours, we ought cheerfully to face the period which will put an end to our follies, and our torments; and to rejoice that death comes to deliver us from thoſe paſſions which damn us. After mature reflection on theſe grave matters, I intend to preſerve my good humour as long as this paltry and frail machine

chine ſhall endure; and I adviſe you to do the ſame. Far from complaining of my approaching end, I ought to apologize to the public for having had the impertinence to live ſo long; for having wearied and teaſed mankind, and for having been a charge upon the world for three-fourths of a century, which is really paſt all joking.

I quit this ſubject, which may appear to you too gloomy, to thank you for the anecdote of the emperor Leopold, which I found in your letter. Saints, it muſt be owned, cannot but have reſources with which the profane are unacquainted. Among us, the work of propagation is one of the moſt common of phyſical acts. Among the ſaints, all is performed by miracle. But unfortunately miracles are not continually ſucceſsful, in this perverſe age. What however the prince loſt in maſſes he gained in ridicule, which he drew on himſelf by his folly.

I, like you, have heard that the Cæſar Joſeph has ſome diſputes with the holy father, relative to a maſs, which he would not ſay for Maria Thereſa. I dare preſume they will accommodate matters, at the death of the duke of Modena; and that the vicar of Jeſus Chriſt will cede the dutchy of Ferrara to the deſcendants of Auſtria Lorrain; which ceſſion will at leaſt be

equal

equal to a maſs; and the ſoul of Maria Thereſa, hearing the news, will vault from purgatory into paradiſe. This aſſertion is merely hypothetical. I am a layman, and it appertains only to the Sorbonne to declare what paſſes in heaven and in purgatory, as in hell.

I forgot to inform you that, a few days ſince, I met with a prince of Salm, at Berlin, who is freſh imported from Paris, and who overwhelmed me with ſhame. Compared to him, I found myſelf ſo ſtupid, ſo awkward, ſo ſilly, that I ſcarcely had courage to give him an anſwer. The graces are kneaded up in his dough; every geſture is far fetched elegance, and every word a riddle. He diſcuſſes and penetrates the very abyſs of trifles with infinite dexterity; and is better read in the map of the whole empire of ogles than all the Scuderis in the univerſe. "Ah! Father "Bouhours," cried I, "I am obliged to own "you are in the right; and that, beyond the "walls of Paris, nothing can be diſcovered, ex-"cept that groſs common ſenſe which is not worth "mentioning." Perhaps the poet, who wrote the verſes addreſſed to cardinal de Bernis, had his brain full of the reflections of Rochefoucault, and ſuppoſed that all our actions originate in no other principle than that of ſelf-love and vanity.

The cardinal might anſwer him that it is as eaſy to cenſure as it is difficult to act.

For my part, being a great advocate for indulgence, becauſe I feel I have often need of it when I appear before the world, I think no man ſhould be condemned without having firſt been heard. You further know that it is improper for ſuperiors to be judged by their inferiors; and the dignity of a cardinal raiſes him above all the kings on earth; wherefore, * * *

exiſt, and were he worſhipped by mankind. I was well acquainted with Beaumont the advocate, a man reſpectable for his eloquence and morals, and particularly for the generous courage with which he ſupported the cauſe of oppreſſed virtue; nor could I refuſe him my eſteem. But, as for the abbé de Beaumont, of whom you ſpeak, I know nothing of him, except from the diſcourſe which you have had the goodneſs to ſend me.

This good abbé deprives me of all utterance; he has unfortunately thought proper to ſay ſuch obliging and ſuch flattering things of me that I can only admire, and be ſilent. Ah, my dear D'Alembert, let us occaſionally repeat the wiſeſt ſaying that ever eſcaped Solomon—Vanity of vanities! The vanity of fame! Man is an atom, plunged into the ocean of eternity; one moment he is born and the next dies; and he is moſt perfect who has leaſt vice. His days are paſſed in building and pulling down. Can a being of ſuch a ſpecies deſerve panegyric! Let the names of thoſe who have taught us to till the earth, to grind corn, to knead, and to quench our thirſt by grateful liquors, be perpetuated! Let the memory of thoſe who perſuaded men to ſacrifice a part of their individual intereſt to the general good remain! But what ſhall I ſay of others?

others? They have been praiſed only becauſe they have been talked of; and their enthuſiaſts are the firſt to drive waſps and hornets from their chambers, which ſting as they buz; but forbear to moleſt the flies, becauſe they are leſs troubleſome.

This does not relate to the good Thereſa, who, releaſed from purgatory by the efficacy of maſſes ſaid for her ſoul's repoſe, now keeps turning her roſary in Paradiſe. Theſe waſps and hornets refer to a certain inhabitant of the ſhores of the Baltic, to whom twenty years ago you paid a viſit.

A few days ſince I read the following lines:

Céſar n'a point d'aſile, où ſon ombre repoſe;
Et l'ami Pompignan croit être quelque choſe.*

I often repeat this diſtich; eſpecially when eloquent pens or lips diſtil elaborate and ſubtle incenſe, which intoxicates the poor brain that is deſtitute of philoſophy. While prieſts inceſſantly exclaim, from their pulpits—"No rea-"ſoning! No reaſoning!"—I wiſh men inceſſantly exclaimed, in the ears of princes—"No "pride! No pride!—Remember thy firſt habi-

* Cæſar finds no aſylum in which his ſhade repoſes; while friend Pompignan believes himſelf ſomebody.

" tation was between the *inteſtinum rectum* and " the veſica!" I own that, had Quelus, Maugiron, Luynes, the old duke of Richelieu, and in a word the courtiers of your kings, whiſpered ſome ſuch agreeable things, in their maſter's ear, the fortune of theſe favourites would have been leſs ſplendid. But, perhaps, were men thus ſincere, Henry III. would have leſs perſecuted the heretics; perhaps Louis XIII. would have been more ſparing of the blood of his ſubjects; perhaps Genoa would not have been bombarded, under Louis XIV.; perhaps the chamber of reunion would not have been erected; and perhaps, in the year 1672, the Dutch would have remained in peace; which would have been advantageous to poor humanity. You great philoſophers muſt decide, on reflections, thrown out at a venture, by an inſignificant German. In the mean time, my monade ſalutes yours, and entreats you, whenever you wiſh to think of the being that vegetates on the banks of the Spree, that you would employ the tube of the abbé de Beaumont; otherwiſe you may view the fine phantom which the abbé has created through a falſe medium.

On which I pray, &c.

LET-

LETTER CCIX.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, June 29, 1781.

I IMAGINE your majeſty is at preſent returned from your military tour, and again are ſeated in your philoſophic retreat. I eagerly therefore do myſelf the honour to anſwer your laſt charming letter, notwithſtanding the remains, which I ſtill feel, of two or three fits of fever, which have left me weak, but which may have done me good, by ridding me, according to the phyſicians, of ſome peccant and morbific matter. The excellent leſſon your majeſty has been pleaſed to give me, on the hypochondria, now more elegantly termed the vapours, makes me fear, to the diſgrace of my reaſon, that your majeſty ſuppoſes I am attacked by this diſeaſe. But no ſuch thing; I can aſſure you, I contemplate the decay of my corporal and intellectual faculties with a cold and philoſophic eye. As this decay is the conſequence of age, I being now ſixty-four, and the long labours with which my poor head is fatigued (for all heads, ſire, and mine eſpecially, are not of the ſame force as yours) I conſole myſelf by thinking ſuch is the fate of mankind;

and that he who, like me, is ſlowly journeying toward the other world, without any great ſufferings either of body or of mind, is one of thoſe human creatures who is moſt favoured by Providence.

I have not the honour to know, not even by ſight, the prince of Salm, of whom your majeſty is pleaſed to ſpeak. The life I lead deprives me of the advantage of encountering this elegant ſpecies. But thoſe who are acquainted with this prince have ſpoken of him exactly in the ſame manner as your majeſty. The ideas with which he inſpired you are exactly conformable to thoſe entertained of him, by the few reaſonable people with whom he by chance aſſociated. Theſe are the gentlemen, ſire, who inſpire foreigners with an idea ſo little favourable to the French nation, but whom fortunately the nation does not totally reſemble. I am acquainted indeed with no country in which there are not, at once, two nations in the ſame nation; evidently different, evidently diſtinct, and between whom there is nothing in common; like a river, the waters of which, from their confluence to an exceedingly great diſtance, flow after each other without ever mingling. This, ſire, is an ample ſubject; but it is one of which we muſt treat only in a whiſper; and to do this I am unfortunately

tunately too diſtant from your majeſty. I only can allow myſelf to add, as a ſpecimen of our double national character, that, on one hand, good citizens and ſages are moſt deſirous to ſee an end to a war which has hitherto been exceedingly ruinous, without much advantage; and that, on the other, our faſhionable gentry are ſolely occupied by the haſty rebuilding of the opera-houſe, which has lately been entirely burnt down.

Your majeſty would be highly amuſed, too, by all the contradictory reports you would hear, in our ſocieties, relative to the recent retreat of M. Necker; another ſubject for deep reflection; but which muſt not paſs through the hands of thoſe honeſt clerks, who read letters at the poſt-office; whoſe eyeſight, of which they make ſo worthy and ſo noble a uſe, God preſerve!

The Cæſar Joſeph, as your majeſty calls him, is ſaid at preſent to be at Verſailles, incognito; or is every moment expected there, without intending to ſhew his face at Paris. We reaſon and prate much on the ſubject of his journey. If it be, as is affirmed, to negotiate peace, may God ſecond his efforts! It ſeems to me, judging from public report, that this prince rather ill treats the holy father, and his livery-men, both monaſtic and ſecular. He goes ſo far, it is ſaid,

as to grant liberty and naturalization to the Jews; which the auguſt emperors, his anceſtors, would have regarded as the moſt heinous of crimes! To you, ſire, muſt humanity and philoſophy return thanks, for all which ſovereigns do, and cauſe to be done, to favour toleration and repreſs fanaticiſm; for it was your majeſty who firſt ſet them the great example; in itſelf ſo beautiful, and ſo eaſy of imitation; but which however they have hitherto imitated ſo little. In the language of the holy ſcripture, let us pray to the King of Kings, that their majeſties may grow wiſer.

I am, with the moſt profound and tender veneration, &c.

LETTER CCX.

From the King.

July 14, 1781.

HERE am I, returned from the Sarmatian frontiers, which I have viſited, and happy once more to find myſelf in my cell. It is for the prince of Salm, and ſuch red-heeled fops, to make the world reſound with their fame, and their follies. My age induces me to retire from their whole

whole crew, and to paſs the remainder of my days with the ancients, whom I ſoon ſhall join; keeping myſelf apart from the moderns, with whom it is not worth while to form an acquaintance. Do not think, I entreat you, while you read this beginning, that I have the vapours, for this I aſſure you is not the fact. I ſee my thread gliding through the fingers of the Parcæ, and ſhortening, yet am not moved by the ſight. Daily experience is a ſchool which teaches us the mutability of our exiſtence. The particles which eſcape by imperceptible perſpiration, the various ſecretions of the body, and phlebotomy, accuſtom us to die inch-meal. Tamed to the loſs of a part of ourſelves, we acquire conſtancy to behold, with a ſtoic eye, the total diſſolution of the matter of which we are formed. Yet, when imagination forſakes us, and when the memory becomes treacherous, and the ſight feeble and confuſed, ſelf-love riſes in arms, in the generality of mankind, againſt time, which robs them of qualities which they imagined to be indelible. The admiration in which they held their pretended perfections excites the moſt ridiculous regret in them, for the loſs of ſome temporary properties of their being; and they do not recollect that they were nothing, in the

preceding age, and that they ſhall be nothing, in the next.

Old men might well find cauſe of conſolation, by reflecting that they have no true friends, except in their cotemporaries; and that friendſhip, a bleſſing ſo ineſtimable to the ſage, is to him for ever loſt, ſhould he ſurvive the ſecond or third generation. The different modes of thinking, and of acting, are too oppoſite to aſſimilate; they therefore ſee themſelves deſerted in ſociety; like as we behold old oaks in foreſts, which have reſiſted the injuries of the weather, with their tops dry and withered, yet overlooking the young ſurrounding trees. But, though ſuch reflections do not affect me, they may perhaps be too gloomy for a philoſopher, who lives encircled by the Sybarites of the Seine.

Let us therefore aſſume more cheerful ſubjects. This Cæſar Joſeph, whom you mention, confirms me in my propenſity to the opinions of the acataleptic ſect. Some ſay he is at Bruſſels; others at Paris; and I anſwer, like madame de Sevigné, I do not think he is at either place. He makes all the monks and abbés of his dominions tremble. Some pretend he hates the perjured, and obliges theſe gentlemen to an exact obſervance of the vow of poverty, which they

they have taken. Here you ſee the good which war effects, in Chriſtianity; for war coſts immenſe ſums, and princes borrow. New wars new debts, which muſt be paid. The treaſury being empty, what is to be done? The only remedy is to ſtrip the clergy of their wealth; and neceſſity obliges monarchs to recur to this ſole remaining expedient. Were our Calvin a witneſs of theſe events, he would thus addreſs us.

"Admire, brethren, the impenetrable ways "of Providence! The Being of Beings, who "abhors the horrible and ſacrilegious ſuperſti- "tion into which the church has fallen, makes "not the voice of the ſage the inſtrument to "render truth triumphant; nor deigns to work "miracles to root up error! What then is the "inſtrument this being employs, for the de- "ſtruction of monks; and to cauſe thoſe vile "and impure organs of fanaticiſm to vaniſh, "from the face of the earth?—Kings, brethren, "kings! That is to ſay, the moſt ignorant ſpe- "cies of men that crawl on the ſurface of this "globe! And how does the great Demiurgos "make theſe ignorant ſpecies promote his end? "By their intereſt, brethren. Yes! Infamous "intereſt! For once, thou ſhalt be uſeful to "mankind; by exciting the paſſions of theſe

"demi-

" demi-gods of the age, by bidding them pil-
" lage the hoards of prieſts, thou ſhalt arm them
" with a deſtructive falchion, to cut off the race
" whoſe ſacrilegious appetite and inſatiate en-
" trails were unceaſingly crammed with fleſh
" and blood. Oh! Altitudo, &c."

It is not me, however, but John Calvin who ſays all this. Obſerve the proteſt, gentlemen of the poſt-office; and, ſhould your noble curioſity induce you to inquire into the contents of my letter, do not confound my name with that of Calvin. I too much reſpect the profound knowledge of the archbiſhop of Paris, and of his maker of mandates, to wiſh to give them offence. Neither can any perſon hold the unalterable folly of the antique Sorbonne, and its infallible deciſions, in greater reſpect.

For your part, my dear Anaxagoras, let me beg you to remain perſuaded how entirely I eſteem you.

On which I pray, &c.

LET-

LETTER CCXI.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, July 30, 1781.

I BEGIN this letter by preſenting to your majeſty new homage, paid to you once again while writing the eulogium of Maria Thereſa. It is the work of a young ſcholar of fourteen, of great hope, who thinks it his duty, young as he is, to join the voices of all Europe; and, in the ſixth page, who ſpeaks of your majeſty, in tolerable good poetry, much the ſame as all Europe thinks. Should your majeſty deign to impower me to give the leaſt encouragement to this youth, he, like Horace, *will ſtrike the heavens with his head*, proud to have obtained praiſe from ſo great a king; and I ſhall addreſs your majeſty in the words of the pſalmiſt David—*Out of the mouths of babes and ſucklings haſt thou perfected praiſe.*

I have, within a few days of each other, received two letters from your majeſty, which are maſterly performances of practical philoſophy. Whoever ſhould read theſe excellent letters, and not read the ſignature, would ſuppoſe them written by Epictetus, and never ſuſpect they came from a king who, after having made the

world

world reſound with his name, looks down, with ſo much ſuperiority and intelligence, on the inſignificance of grandeur and human vanity. They prove how truly I have ſaid, in the two lines which with others I have written under your majeſty's picture—

Modeſte ſur un trône, orné par la victoire,
*Il ſut apprécier et mériter la gloire.**

I know not what route the Cæſar Joſeph will take, in his inquiries after this fame, which is ſo vain, yet ſo much ſought after, but I think he will be more likely to find it by ſeizing on the revenues of the clergy than by ſeizing on Bavaria. Your majeſty rightly obſerves that war, among all the evils which it brings on mankind, is at length productive of this deſirable good, that princes transfer their debts to the prieſts and monks. The French, who *write* ſo many excellent things on this ſubject, and *perform* ſo few, will I believe be the laſt to do themſelves juſtice; there ſtill are too many prieſts at Verſailles; yet do it they will, at laſt; were it only for the ſhame of being ſingular, and not acting according to reaſon.

This ſacerdotal race, whom your majeſty eſti-

* Modeſt on the throne, adorned by conqueſt, he knew how to eſtimate and to merit fame.

mates

mates at their true worth, and who, to the diſgrace of France, are ſtill in ſo much credit there, ſometimes has pleaſant adventures. I have lately been told that, about eight or ten years ago, a fanatic biſhop wiſhed to refuſe giving what we call the *Bon Dieu* * to a poor devil of a fanatic Janſeniſt, who was dying. As the biſhop was apprehenſive the curate of the pariſh, in deſpite of his prohibition, would adminiſter the ſacrament to the Janſeniſt, he ſent one of his grand vicars to conſume, or, in other words, to eat up, all the *Bon Dieus* that could be found in the tabernacle, that not ſo much as one might remain for the poor ſick man. The grand vicar obeyed; not one was left. But, as he had filled his flaggon brimful, the glutton was ſeized with an alarming indigeſtion. The phyſician was ſent for, who foretold imminent danger, impoſſible to be avoided, except by an emetic. This the grand vicar pertinaciouſly refuſed to take; affirming, to the great aſtoniſhment of the phyſician, that vomit he would not; for the doctor could not comprehend the reaſon given him by the prieſt —that his *conſcience would not permit him*. In fine, the prieſt died a martyr to his holy voracity. This, ſire, is an excellent tale to put in rhyme; your majeſty ought to verſify it, and

* The good God; or, the Sacrament. T.

dedicate

dedicate it to your friend, Chriſtopher, or Chriſtophilus, de Beaumont.

The orator, whoſe funeral oration I did myſelf the honour to ſend you, is by no means ambitious that your majeſty ſhould confound him with this worthy and learned prelate. The name of the orator is Boiſmont, and not Beaumont; nor has he any thing of the prieſt, except that he is *apte et idoine* * for the poſſeſſion of benefices.

The emperor was to arrive, on the twenty-eighth, not at Paris but at Verſailles. Had I the honour to meet him, which cannot be, for I go as ſeldom to Verſailles as to Bruſſels, I ſhould take the liberty to recommend him, in your majeſty's name, to the ſacerdotal and monachal ſtrong box; which advice I preſume your majeſty would not gainſay.

The excellent ſermon which you have compoſed for Calvin, in the laſt letter with which you have honoured me, is ſuperior to all the declamations of Bourdaloue. I ſhould reply, if I dared, by another ſermon, which no doubt would not equal yours, but which might give too much offence to the curioſity of the poſtmaſters, between Paris and Berlin; and I recollect that the Evangeliſt has ſaid—"Woe to him "by whom the offence cometh"—from which,

* Is ready; has gone through all his degrees. T.

like

like Rabelais, I wiſh *curiouſly* to preſerve myſelf. The thing which pleaſes me beſt, in this charming ſermon, is that it proves your majeſty to be very cheerful, conſequently in very good health. You have no need to tell me you have not the vapours; your diverting and excellent letter is ſufficient proof. But it is time to finiſh mine, which is by no means its equal.

I am, with the moſt tender and profound veneration, &c.

Poſtſcript. I learn, as the poſt is departing, that the emperor yeſterday arrived at Paris. He viſited a few places in the city; and at five o'clock in the evening ſet off for Verſailles; where operas, comedies, balls, parades, &c. &c. were preparing for his reception; and concerning which I believe he troubles himſelf little. It is ſaid, all theſe pleaſures, or rather theſe fatigues, will be of ſhort continuance; and that he will depart on Friday, for Vienna. It is further ſaid, he will only viſit the royal family, and the miniſters Maurepas and De Vergennes. If he come to negotiate peace, he will perform a good work, for we have great need of it, in the manner in which we make war. Our enemies fortunately make it no better than we do, and I continually recollect the remark of Fontenelle, who ſaid—"In time of war, men talk of no-

"thing

" thing but the balance of power, throughout " Europe; though there is another balance at " leaſt of equal efficacy, and equally proper for " the preſervation of each power; which is the " balance of blunders."

May I venture to preſent a petition to your majeſty, the granting of which will render you dear and reſpectable to all our young ſcholars, as you are to all thoſe who are not ſcholars? The ſtudent of fourteen, who has ſung your praiſe in excellent Latin verſe, is, as I have juſt been aſſured, in extreme indigence. He is abſolutely ignorant, as are all thoſe who intereſt themſelves for him, that I have the honour to write to your majeſty; conſequently you may refuſe my trifling requeſt wholly at your eaſe. But I dare believe that a very ſmall donation, from your majeſty to this youth, to encourage him in his ſtudies, would be worthy of the great king who honours and protects letters, from one end of Europe to the other; who encourages them in every claſs, and every age, and who is alſo celebrated by them, in every claſs, and every age.

Ten thouſand pardons for all this prattling! Fortunately for your majeſty, the poſt warns me it is time to conclude.

LETTER CCXII.

From the King.

August 12, 1781.

I AM obliged to confeſs you are a univerſal genius. I long ſince knew you had made a great progreſs in the high ſciences, and that the profane writings of Horace had not eſcaped your notice; but for the royal prophet, the favourite muſician of Saul, the moſt famous pſalm-ſinger of the Jews, I never ſuſpected you had ſtudied him enough to quote him. Therefore, to diſplay my political erudition, I will apply to you the ſaying of a miniſter of Spain to his king, when the houſe of Braganza deprived him of Portugal—"Your monarchy, or your learning, "is like a ditch; the more you dig the deeper "it is." Every thing is within the ſphere of your knowledge; from the dregs of the Hebrew to the king-prophet. Beware leſt the Sorbonne ſhould imitate you; they then would ſing, in the church of Notre Dame—"O Lord, root out "the Engliſh! Happy ſhall he be that taketh "their children, and daſheth them againſt the "ſtones."

" *A nos chiens s'engraiſſeront*
" *De leur ſang, qu'ils lècheront.*" *

In the pacific region which I inhabit, theſe lines would be thought worthy of American ſcalpers and cannibals; but, with reſpect to the doctors of the Sorbonne, they even collect as ſublime what is every where elſe rejected. I therefore hope that, on ſome grand feſtival, held before the emperor, Joſeph II. he will be regaled with this hymn.

The verſes of your youth poſſeſs energy; his talent is ſuperior to his age. Beware that his fate reſemble not that of Pic de la Mirandole, and Baratier, who both died young, the victims of premature genius. My banker will ſupply you with ſome money for the riſing poet. Some Latin puriſts have pretended they have detected galliciſms; but the age of the poet is a ſufficient excuſe. How much was I ſurpriſed to find myſelf one of the dramatis perſonæ in company with religion! We never before lived under the ſame roof. I well perceive we need but grow old, and experience will teach us nothing is impoſſible:

* " And make them dip their feet in blood
" Of thoſe that hate my name;
" The tongues of dogs they ſhall be red,
" With licking of the ſame."

Sternhold and Hopkins.

poſſible: ſo that he who has the impertinence to live long will always find novelty.

Did I wiſh to make a collection of the novelties I have ſeen, they would fill as many volumes as the *Encyclopedie*. Here are a few ſpecimens. I have ſeen Louis XIV. ſcarcely buried ere he was deſpiſed, and forgotten. I have ſeen two queens of France; Poiſſon and l'Ange *. I have ſeen fire and water unite, the Bourbons allied with the Habſpourgs. I have ſeen the Jeſuits extirpated. I have ſeen philoſophy draw truth out of her well. I have ſeen barbarians refuſe to inter Voltaire. I have ſeen rebellious children mutiny againſt their papa, the pope, huſtle, pillage, and degrade him. I have ſeen—a number of other things, concerning which I ſhall be ſilent. Should this ſample pleaſe the public, the remainder will flow freely; and ſhould you gentlemen, who break open letters, ſuppoſe you have diſcovered all I think, by reading theſe lines, I give you notice that you deceive yourſelves. Or, had you even made the diſcovery, your memory would but be loaded with a few additional follies.

But you, my dear Anaxagoras, expect me to write epigrams when the ſymbols of winter cover

* The names of madame de Pompadour and the counteſs du Barré, miſtreſſes to Louis XV. T.

my half bald head, when my blood is icy, my imagination equally cold, and at a time when I ſcarcely can drag the limbs of my former exiſtence after me. Alas! The roſes of my youth are faded; and, falling, have left nothing but the brambles of decay. It would be excellent to hear me, with a tremulous voice, declaiming a pointleſs epigram on Beaumont; meriting as he does to be torn and ſcattered to the winds, by ſatyrs and bacchantæ. I write this letter in buſkins. I had put on the ſock to write the preceding.

Ainſi, ſans chagrins, ſans noirceurs,
De la fin de mes jours poiſon lent et funeſte,
Je ſème, encore, de quelques fleurs,
Le peu de chemin qui me reſte *.

Anacreon, Chaulieu, Horace, Virgil and Voltaire are my poetic evangeliſts. I abandon the wits of the old teſtament to Beaumont, to the doctors of the Sorbonne, and to blockheads; they may make the mountains dance and ſkip if they pleaſe; let them but leave Parnaſſus ſtanding and I ſhall be ſatisfied. Inſtead of *Notre Dame*, and *Saint Geneviève*, I have the nine ſiſters and Sappho; and, in lieu of Saint Denis, Apollo, who does not carry his head under his arm.

* Theſe verſes are tranſlated, in a note to letter CLXI. T.

arm *. You will allow that an honeſt man has no cauſe of complaint, in ſuch company.

Let me add, we do not ſuffer indignation here, from your kind of gluttony. We celebrate our feſtivals with figs and nectarines, and drink the juice of the Muſcadine grape, and perform all this without necromancer, or necromancy. You ought to reſolve to partake of our love-feaſts, for of theſe your faith renders you worthy; and the brethren would receive you with open arms. But what talk I? You refer me to the valley of Jehoſaphat, and I am afraid we both ſhall make our exit without ever meeting. If you wiſh for a pair of buſkins, by the only maker, a pair you ſhall have; for every thing in this world is folly, mirth excepted.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CCXIII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, September 10, 1781.

YOUR majeſty appears ſo ſtupified, and as I may ſay ſo ſcandaliſed, by my royal pro-

* One of the miracles related of Saint Denis. T.

phetic and Hebrew erudition, that I am almoſt tempted to bluſh at it myſelf, and to aſk pardon of the royal philoſopher. But the royal philoſopher will forgive me for remembering all this rubbiſh, when he ſhall learn that I had the misfortune to be educated by bigots, who obliged me to bawl many a pſalm, and that Heaven endowed me with ſuch a memory as would not ſuffer them to be forgotten, during a courſe of fifty years. I however conſole myſelf, by the uſe I make of them, in ſinging your majeſty's praiſe.

I have received the gratuity which your majeſty has been pleaſed to grant the youth, whom I have not yet been able to acquaint with your favours, becauſe there is a month's vacation now, at our colleges, and he is gone I know not whither to ſpend his holidays, with his poor and obſcure relations, who live, at I know not what village, a hundred leagues from Paris. But I have remitted the ſum entire to his profeſſor, who will give it him, on his return. I have informed the whole univerſity of the act of your majeſty, to aid and encourage this poor youth in his ſtudies, and gratitude has been generally incited; ſo that I am certain your majeſty's praiſe will be ſung, in every college, in Latin and Greek, perhaps in Hebrew, and even in French;

French; though French is the language with which our pedants are the leaſt acquainted.

Your majeſty has reaſoned excellently againſt Solomon, who pretends there is nothing new under the ſun. I join with you, ſire, to prove his falſehood; and, without going further than the preſent year, I could ſhew the monarch, with ſeven hundred concubines, more than one novelty of which he never dreamed. But I muſt imitate your majeſty, and be ſilent. I wiſh however to know what are your thoughts, on the letter which Cæſar Joſeph II. is ſaid to have written, to his moſt holy father, pope Pius VI. to requeſt, in all humility, he would, once for all, ſettle the limits of the two powers, to the end that they might no more be mentioned. This treatment of his holineſs, by his Imperial majeſty, ſeems like bringing the cat to trial. I am in pain for the poor cat; for Joſeph does not ſeem to ſtrike with a palſied arm, nor appear willing to be paid with a joke.

Heaven be praiſed, your majeſty has no need to propoſe like caſes of conſcience to an old prieſt. Mount Parnaſſus, as you have well ſaid, is both your holy ſee, and your Sorbonne; and Horace, Virgil, and Voltaire are your caſuiſts. May you long maintain this ineſtimable cheerfulneſs, ſo neceſſary to your own preſervation, and

consequently to the happiness of Europe! While reading the letters you do me the honour to write to me, I almost become merry myself; although, at other times, I am little inclined to mirth. But it is sufficient consolation to me that your majesty is in good health. May you long live to enjoy your glory; and may you long continue to treat me with like kindness!

A man of letters of my acquaintance, well informed, worthy, and destitute of fortune, is desirous of attaching himself to your majesty either as a member of your academy or in any other office. He does not ask any considerable salary, and might be useful from the variety of his knowledge. His name is Dubois. Being at Berlin in the year 1778, he had the honour to present, by the hands of the printer to the court, Decker, an estimable work, to your majesty, written by him, the title of which is *Essai sur l'Histoire Littéraire de Pologne**; and your majesty did him the honour to return him a favourable answer. He lived six years at Warsaw, where he was professor of history and civil law, which situation his health obliged him to quit. He is well-read in French literature, military antiquities, physics, and natural history; he understands the German, Italian, and Polish languages; and

* Essay on the Literary History of Poland.

has

has ſent various obſervations to the academy of Berlin, which are inſerted in its memoirs. He is now printing, at Paris, a tranſlation of a work, by M. Achard, on precious ſtones. He is in correſpondence with ſeveral members of the academy of Berlin; and the death of M. Francheville, and the retreat of M. Beguelin, might facilitate his admiſſion into that ſociety, where he would not be miſplaced. Perhaps indeed your majeſty might rather chooſe to employ him in your cabinet, your chancery, or as ſecretary to ſome embaſſy. I believe him, from the variety of his knowledge, to be equally capable of each of theſe purſuits. Should the ſervices of this man of letters ſuit your majeſty, he waits your commands, and your will.

I am, with the moſt tender gratitude and veneration, &c.

LETTER CCXIV.

From the King.

September 27, 1781.

ONE of the ignorant, like me, receives edification from the leſſons ſent him by one of the

the learned of the firſt claſs; and ſome authors* appear to me leſs abſurd, when paſſages are cited from their works, than when the works themſelves are read. Malice quotes and diſfigures the original, ſo as to render the moſt orthodox paſſages heretical. But the philoſopher, when he quotes, imparts an air of good ſenſe to the moſt trivial thoughts. I therefore congratulate thoſe, of whom you ſpeak, that their vile madrigals have been inſerted in your writings. Nor am I the leſs perſuaded that Virgil, Horace, and Voltaire ſtand higher in your judgment than ſuch inventors of hyperbole, and that you never will place them beſide Newton or Deſcartes. If I am too haſty in my concluſions, I ſtand corrected.

It were to be wiſhed that Philoſophy and Reaſon had totally routed Superſtition and Fanaticiſm, for they ſeem to me to take a new turn; and, if the monſtrous edifice of Error be overthrown, it muſt be by the poverty of empires, which will give place to more refined and more perfect ſyſtems of finance. I know that prince Kaunitz, ſome years ſince, was labouring to trace out a line of demarcation, and to preſcribe bounds to the ſpiritual power of Chriſt's vicars,

* The king refers to the quotation from the Pſalms, in the laſt letter but one of D'Alembert. T.

by

by which the temporal authority of his ſovereign might profit. Apparently, to put this project in immediate execution, Cæſar Joſeph is beginning a negotiation with the holy ſee. The throne of St. Peter has been erected on the ideal credit of the bank of the Vatican; but letters of exchange, payable in the next world, are proteſted, and credit falls. Though theſe ſymptoms do not announce a general bankruptcy, they are inſenſibly leading the public that road. The number of monks is diminiſhing, in many places; the organs of ſuperſtition are palſy-ſtruck, and the porter of Paradiſe will be reduced to the mere biſhop of Rome.

Thoſe happy days we never ſhall ſee; however, according to the direction of Maupertuis, I heat my imagination, and behold ſuch excellent things with the mind's eye, bleſſing the fortunate age which ſhall enjoy an advantage which, to ours, has been denied.

But why are you aſtoniſhed at my cheerfulneſs; or that I clap my hands in ecſtaſy, at ſuch flattering predictions as imagination ſupplies? Recollect that tranquillity of mind, and cheerfulneſs, are the only kind of happineſs of which we can partake. Happineſs muſt be ſought in ourſelves, and not in exterior things, which ſeduce by falſe appearances. Agreeable dreams

conſole

conſole me for the afflictions of which melancholy truths are productive. Act in the ſame manner, my dear D'Alembert; profit by momentary exiſtence, to depict all things in gay colours; let imagination add ſuch embelliſhments as may render this world delightful, and your own exiſtence ſupportable; and do not forget that life is too ſhort to deſerve the trouble of grieving.

I do not recollect the Mr. Dubois of whom you ſpeak. Perhaps I may be able to find ſome ſituation for him here; but it is neceſſary to ſee him, and ſtill more neceſſary to inquire into his morals and conduct, which you can eaſily do. Be kind enough not to preſs me for an anſwer, till the return of your letter. I wiſh you health and mirth, aſſuring you, on my part, of the ſincere pleaſure I take in every thing which relates to you.

On which I pray, &c.

LET-

LETTER CCXV.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, October 26, 1781.

I BEGIN by laying at your majeſty's feet the gratitude of the young ſtudent, whom you have been pleaſed to honour with your favours. The expreſſion of this gratitude you will find, in the letter which the youth has himſelf the honour to write to your majeſty, and which he ſent to me two days ſince, on his return from holiday-making. His poor relations, his tutors, and the univerſity of Paris, of which he is a pupil, all partake of the ſentiments with which this youth is penetrated, by your majeſty's bounty; and with him repeat, after Horace, the wiſh he has made, that your majeſty may remain on earth as long as poſſible, before you ſhall on Olympus rejoin Auguſtus, and other princes who protected letters; and that you long may find greater ſatisfaction in the title of father than in that of monarch.

I congratulate philoſophy by anticipation, in concert with your majeſty, for the luminous days that are to ſucceed, perhaps when I ſhall be no more, yet the morning of which I do not deſpair

but

but that your majeſty and I may ſee; ſo unmercifully does it ſeem to me that Cæſar flogs the horſes, or the aſſes, that draw the pontifical machine, which begins to be ſo disjointed as to threaten approaching ruin. Report ſays the holy ſee begins to be diſturbed, and to perceive it is a ſerious affair. Once again, it is to your majeſty, heretic as you are, that Germany and other nations will be indebted for this favour, by the excellent example you have afforded, to catholic princes and others, of toleration, and likewiſe of your contempt for all human ſuperſtitions.

A circumſtance of ſtill greater worth to Germany, and Europe, is the philoſophic and charming gaiety with which your majeſty thinks, writes, and ſpeaks; becauſe ſuch gaiety announces a ſtrong exiſting principle of life; and becauſe all thinking beings, in this ſublunary world, I had almoſt ſaid all beings that breathe, at leaſt in Europe, have need of your preſervation. For my part, whoſe frail and paltry exiſtence is unfortunately not neceſſary to any one, I imitate, as much as I can, the excellent example of your majeſty; I laugh at all the follies, great and ſmall, that are ſaid and done on this globe, and find my health the better for ſuch conduct.

I am ſufficiently acquainted with M. Dubois, and have been ſo long enough, to aſſure your

majeſty that he is a well-informed man of letters, converſant in ancient and modern hiſtory, with ſome knowledge of the laws of nations, and one who has viſited various countries of Europe. I have reaſon to believe he is a man whoſe morals and conduct are good, and that your majeſty will find cauſe of ſatisfaction in the different offices in which you ſhall find him employment. He was profeſſor of hiſtory and the laws of nations at Warſaw, which place his health obliged him to leave; though not without the moſt advantageous and moſt authentic atteſtations, which I have ſeen and read, of his capacity, and good behaviour. Meſſieurs Bitaubé and Thiebault, who are acquainted with him, as likewiſe is M. Decker the printer, and various other perſons, can bear teſtimony of his conduct to your majeſty, ſhould you think proper to interrogate them on the ſubject. M. Bernouilli makes long and honourable mention of him, in that volume of his travels in which he ſpeaks of Poland. Should your majeſty, after theſe various references, think that you may ſafely afford employment to M. Dubois, I entreat you to ſend me your commands, relative to his departure and his journey.

Your majeſty is, no doubt, by this informed

that

that our queen was delivered of a prince, on the twenty-ſecond of this month.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, and the moſt lively gratitude, &c.

LETTER CCXVI.

From the King.

November 10, 1781.

I HAVE been aſtoniſhed at the ſtyle of your young ſcholar, and think he will make his fortune in France, if he ſhould, in time, bring his talent for flattery to perfection, the talent moſt neceſſary for ſucceſs at court. Cæſar accepted praiſe from Cicero, and various others; Auguſtus drank deep draughts of it from Virgil, Ovid, and Horace; Leo X. preferred paraſites to the apoſtles; Louis XIV. welcomed, with avidity, the flattery which his academy diſtributed, and his love for the opera originated in the praiſes contained in the prologues; Alexander, in his expedition againſt Porus, being overcome with fatigue, exclaimed — "Oh! "Athenians, you know not what I endure, to "gain your applauſe!"

Not being formed to rank with any of theſe demi-

demi-gods, I imagine I hear an inſect reading the panegyric of another inſect; and that this is the juſt eſtimate of the praiſes we beſtow on each other. It is our duty to be juſt, and beneficent, and we may deſerve approbation; but to praiſe wretched earth-worms, that exiſt but for a moment, and then eternally diſappear, is folly. Let us have the fortitude to be ſatisfied with our deſtiny, and not ſuffer a heated imagination, inflated by hyperbole, to make giants of pigmies.

I forget myſelf: it had eſcaped my memory that I was writing to a philoſopher, who can read me leſſons on modeſty and prudence, were they neceſſary.

I perceive you ſuppoſe you ſhall ſoon walk over the ruins of ſuperſtition; but I cannot imagine its deſtruction ſo near. Should the apoſtolic Joſeph humble the whore of Babylon, according to the elegant ſtyle of Jurieu, do not imagine that philoſophy has any concern in the buſineſs, but conſider this as a ſtep in advance to ſeizing on Ferrara from the holy father. The clergy are relieved from their dependence on Rome, that they may not ſound the alarm while Cæſar ſhall ſtrip his holineſs. The biſhop of Vienna will be obliged to ſing *Te Deum*, when his ſpiritual chief ſhall be driven from Ferrara. The ambition and politics of monarchs will

humble the holy ſee, in whatever relates to their intereſts; but the ſtupidity, the credulity, and the fanaticiſm of the vulgar, will ſtill, for many ages, ſupport the extravagance of received fables. Recollect how many centuries Paganiſm was predominant, and thence conclude that the number of philoſophers will never be ſuperior to that of the imbecile and the ignorant; and that ſcarcely one philoſopher, in any age, will be diſcovered among a hundred thouſand inhabitants of this earth. To this add, if you pleaſe, the power of general education, the buſineſs of which is to fill the brain of tender youth with prejudice and error; which, being thus ſucked in with the mother's milk, make deep impreſſions for the remainder of life.

But it is poſſible, and probable, that the number of Cenobites, who are the organs and trumpets of fanaticiſm, will be diminiſhed, and the power of biſhops reduced; who, thus loſing the advantages which reſult from falſe zeal, will become tolerant, not having any thing to gain by perſecution. Thus far am I led by my calculations on probabilities; but to ſuppoſe that men will be without error, and all become philoſophers, is impoſſible; for reaſons which I have before alleged. But if, by the deſtruction of bigotry, they may be rendered tolerant, that is

all

all that can be effected. Leave we therefore the world to run round as it pleaſes, and let us be ſatisfied with the power of thinking freely.

It depends on you to ſend me M. Dubois. Your teſtimony is ſufficient, and in you I confide. When I have converſed with him, I ſhall frankly tell you my opinion. I am well convinced however that he neither could form his head nor his heart in Poland.

I congratulate you on the birth of the Dauphin, and wiſh he may poſſeſs the prudence of Marcus Aurelius, the humanity of Cæſar, the goodneſs of Titus, and the underſtanding of Julian; for nothing leſs than imperial qualities muſt be wiſhed to a French monarch.

For your own part, I wiſh you health and content, for of every thing elſe you are in poſſeſſion; nor can I deſire any increaſe of the gifts of nature for you, with which you have ſo long been enriched.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CCXVII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE. Paris, December 14, 1781.

AN indiſpoſition rather painful, which made me fear a return of my nephritic complaints, and from which I was but yeſterday relieved, has for a week prevented me from writing to your majeſty; nor is this the leaſt evil which has been done me, by this indiſpoſition. I now begin by anſwering the laſt of the two letters with which your majeſty has honoured me, within a ſhort time of each other. Accuſtomed though I am, ſire, to the infinite bounties of every kind which your majeſty for thirty years has heaped upon me, they continually penetrate me with increaſing gratitude, and I am infinitely affected by the new mark which you have given me of this, in admitting M. Selis one of the members of the illuſtrious academy which your majeſty protects, in ſo effectual and ſplendid a manner. Though your majeſty has been kind enough to tell me you would, on this occaſion, pay reſpect to my recommendation of M. Selis, I dare aſſure your majeſty he is worthy of the favour by his works, as your majeſty may convince

vince yourſelf, and by his talents for the education of youth confided to his care, who by him will be taught the ſound principles of literature, and morals. He has charged me to lay at your feet the juſt ſentiments he feels for your perſon, with which ſentiments he will inſpire his pupils, and which you will find expreſſed in the letter he has the honour to write to your majeſty. He intends to honour the choice you have made of him, by ſending ſome diſſertations to the academy, on ſubjects intereſting to literature; and by endeavouring to render them worthy of inſertion, in the memoirs of that learned body.

Your majeſty cannot imagine the gratitude, and emulation, you have excited in the univerſity of Paris, by the bounty with which you have deigned to notice the maſter and the diſciple. Thus ſtudents, as well as ſciences and literature, will be indebted to you for their progreſs in France, as they are in Pruſſia.

Your majeſty expreſſes yourſelf with the trueſt, and at the ſame time the moſt amiable, philoſophy, concerning the praiſes beſtowed on you by the young ſtudent. But ſuch philoſophy, worthy as it is of the great man who can ſo juſtly appreciate all things, will not prevent Philoſophy herſelf from affirming—*The boy has ſaid the truth*

truth—or from applauding the juſtice he has rendered your majeſty.

I, like you, do not think it is the love of philoſophy which has inſpired the Cæſar Joſeph with ſo many projects againſt monks, prieſts, and the court of Rome. I imagine theſe projects do but conceal intereſts of greater magnitude, which will ſoon burſt forth; and, notwithſtanding my diſorder, and my age of ſixty-four, I do not deſpair but that I ſhall one day behold the emperor truly king of the Romans; and the ſucceſſor of Saint Peter reduced to be no more than biſhop of Rome.

Unfortunately, ſire, for the progreſs of reaſon, prieſts ſtill preſerve, in kingdoms not under the Auſtrian power, an influence which muſt ever be prejudicial to knowledge. Would your majeſty believe that the archbiſhop of Paris, who by way of parentheſis is now dying with the dropſy, has demanded that the word *prieſts*, in new plays, ſhould not be pronounced, and that he has obtained his requeſt? The conſcience of theſe people accuſes them, and they think, when evil is ſaid of prieſts, of any religion, they themſelves are underſtood. They reſemble the drunken footman, in the comedy, who, hearing the word raſcal pronounced, with great ſimplicity,

city, ſays—"Raſcal! This man knows me I "find."——The following line has been retrenched from a new piece, the plot of which relates to the fourteenth century, during the times of the emperor Louis of Bavaria and John XXII.

*Le ſacerdoce altier lutte contre l'empire.**

Yet this line only relates a fact, which unfortunately was but too true, of that deplorable æra. Thus, though our young, ſage, and virtuous monarch place no confidence in prieſts, though acquainted with all the evilof which they are capable, his authority is unworthily abuſed to conceal from the people, if poſſible, that prieſts have long been the greateſt enemies of kings, and that they are ſo ſtill; for, when they ſay the royal authority originates in God, it is becauſe they imagine themſelves the repreſentatives of God; and thus uſe every endeavour to ſhackle the moſt legitimate authority, when it ſhall counteract their views.

I hear that, ſix months ago, a wretched woman was burnt, for the hereſy of quietiſm †, in Spain.

* The proud prieſthood wreſtles with the empire.

† The quietiſts were the followers of Molinos, a Spaniſh prieſt. Their opinions were that it was firſt neceſſary to paſs through the purgative life, or the obedience inſpired by the fear of hell. The ſoul after this was finally to obtain perfect

Spain. How horrid, yet how ſtupid, is ſuch an act! But Spain crouches under the moſt contemptible ignorance. Of this the late ill ſucceſs of the nation, before Gibraltar, is a melancholy inſtance.

I read the anſwer of your majeſty to M. Dubois, ſuch as you were pleaſed to write. He is penetrated with gratitude by this anſwer; but, though he feel your majeſty cannot promiſe to employ him without having firſt put him to the proof, the fear that he ſhould not after trial prove ſuitable to your majeſty, and the ſituation in which ſuch a misfortune would leave him, will not allow him to be at the expence of the journey, under this uncertainty. He likewiſe perfectly feels that your majeſty cannot be at ſuch an expence, without knowing of what uſe he may be; he therefore, with the utmoſt regret, renounces the honour which he for a moment flattered himſelf he ſhould enjoy.

I am, ſire, this year, as I have been every other, with the moſt tender veneration, &c.

reſt, and only contemplate its God; but neither act, think, nor wiſh more. It was but the receptacle of divine grace, which impelled it as it pleaſed and how it pleaſed. T.

LET-

LETTER CCXVIII.

From the King.

January 23, 1782.

I RECEIVED your letter on the ſeventh of January, and the multiplicity of affairs I had to tranſact obliged me to defer an anſwer till now, when I am returned to my philoſophic aſylum. Do not imagine that the Chriſtmas carouſals have in the leaſt diſturbed me. Theſe pleaſures are no longer of any worth at my time of life, when the man is dead to the world, when the ice of age has extinguiſhed the fire of youth, and when vegetation ſucceeds to active life. In ſuch a ſtate of apathy, it is difficult to imagine that an old man can, at a diſtance, renovate an ardour for the ſtudy of the belles lettres; and the leſs ſo becauſe the genius of the French nation is the beſt encouragement to this ſtudy. Palm-trees ſhoot up, in France, as on the banks of the Ganges; but, with us, they are hot-houſe plants.

A young ſcholar may no doubt be indulged in the uſe of hyperbole, without which praiſe could not exiſt. I have ſometimes employed it myſelf; and, for that very reaſon, hold it in

very little eſtimation. In my youth, I wrote a panegyric on a ſhoe-maker, whom I took occaſion to raiſe to a level with that emperor whom Pliny ſo magnificently celebrates. The imagination indulges itſelf in ſuch ſportive ſallies, and ſo eaſily riſes to the ſuperlative that the height of praiſe ſometimes becomes the height of ridicule.

But let us leave panegyric, and ſpeak of the projects of the Cæſar Joſeph. You have heard no doubt that poor Braſchi, to avert the ſtorm with which the holy ſee is threatened, had determined to repair to Vienna, that he might ſoften Cæſar, and ſupport, over his Teutonic and Hungarian flock, that plenitude of power which had been confided to him by the holy Peter. To this Joſeph anſwered that his holineſs might come to Vienna, if he pleaſed; but that he ſhould nevertheleſs put his project into execution. Whether the tiara will humble itſelf before the Imperial crown, or not, is ſtill to be known. To avenge the emperors, Frederic II. and Henry, it is neceſſary the pope ſhould be received, at Vienna, as the emperor formerly was at Canoſſe. Then would the honour of the throne, and that of the laity, be redeemed from epiſcopal deſpotiſm. Yet the voice of compaſſion, which ſpeaks in favour of the unfortunate,

is

is heard in my heart, which tells me it was Hildebrand who ſhould have been puniſhed, and not a poor pontiff who, far from doing ill, is clearing the Pontine marſhes. Inſolence excites diſguſt, weakneſs pity. None but the cowardly revenge themſelves on the vanquiſhed; and of the number of theſe I am not. I leave the whore of Babylon to ſeat herſelf quietly on her ſeven hills; provided ſhe abandon her dogmatical deciſions, and preach charity, I ſhould be as little her enemy as that of the Dalai Lama, who ſits in ſtate at Thibet.

I know not whether the quietiſts be burnt, at Madrid; or whether mourning be worn at Liſbon, becauſe the hoſt has been ſtolen; but I hear, and I congratulate you on the event, the archbiſhop of Paris is dead. This Beaumont was not of ſo much worth as the advocate, Elias de Beaumont. The biſhop was a bear, led in a ſtring by an ex-jeſuit; who invented for him, and dictated, all the ſacerdotal abſurdities which he put in act. The bigot ought to praiſe Heaven to find the word prieſt ſtill in uſe; it would be much worſe for him, were it to be heard no more. But this were a ſuppoſition that man might hereafter become reaſonable; which to me appears impoſſible, conſidering the world's propenſity.

You

You muſt not wonder I wiſhed to ſpeak to M. Dubois, previous to entering into an agreement. You cannot imagine what caravans of literary inſects arrive here, of which it is difficult to get rid; and eſpecially becauſe the vermin ſwarm moſt in Poland. For this reaſon, the ſieur Dubois having reſided in that kingdom into which men of merit ſeldom find their way, unfavourable prejudices have been conceived, which could only be removed by proving their falſehood from experience.

I have ſeen moſt of our academicians. Some of them talk to me of a new planet; others of another comet; and I am waiting, till they ſhall decide its fate, that I may pay it all due honours. M. de la Grange calculates, calculates, and calculates, curves as many as you pleaſe. M. Formey writes panegyrics. Achard makes experiments on phlogiſton. Weguelin is ſtudying which way the thirty years war might have been ſooner terminated; and I am doing nothing, but praying for your preſervation, curſing your nephritic malady, and wiſhing for the re-eſtabliſhment of peace in Europe.

On which I pray, &c.

LET-

LETTER CCXIX.

From the King.

February 24, 1782.

GOOD heavens, my dear Anaxagoras, what a bundle of philoſophy have you ſent me! The firſt volume contains the refutation of abſurd ſyſtems, which are ſelf-deſtructive, and which do not deſerve ſuch multitudes of words to reduce them to duſt. The ſtyle is too declamatory, and unſuitable to philoſophic ſubjects; which whoever would treat on ought to be methodical, and to have much logic, and perſpicacity.

But, mercy on me! What ſhall I ſay to the ſecond volume? What! Are there people mad enough to raiſe ſyſtems in the eighteenth century, and create a world according to their whims, without having firſt examined whether the world be not eternal, and whether that doctrine be not much more probable than to give it a beginning? What a chaos is this ſyſtem! An endeavour to raiſe the vortices of Deſcartes from the dead, and very awkwardly mix them up with the Newtonian philoſophy. If there be any vacancy in the mad-houſes of Paris,

ſend

ſend your philoſopher there as ſoon as poſſible; for there he will be ſeated on his throne.

The man who would tilt with Newton muſt be armed at all points, and firmly ſeated in his ſaddle; but your French hero would by the moſt trifling ſhock be unhorſed, and lie proſtrate in the duſt. Take my advice; let us confide in experiment; let reaſon be the ſuperintendent of our philoſophic ſtudies, and let not imagination extend beyond the ſphere of poetry.

The work has put me in an ill humour, and I have wiſhed to unburthen my griefs in your boſom; that, however little, the load might be lightened. I before had the gout, the rheumatiſm, a raſh, and the fever; and the abſurdities you have ſent me have almoſt put an end to my exiſtence. Of all diſeaſes that of reaſoning ill is the moſt mortal, when it attacks a brain that revolts at nonſenſe. For the love of God, if your French writers bring forth ſuch abortions, do not afflict me with them! Let me depart in peace, from this world, without diſguſting me by the dull abſurdities of authors, who ſuppoſe themſelves philoſophers and who are only viſionaries, enamoured of their own lunatic illuſions.

On which I pray, &c.

LET-

LETTER CCXX.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, March 1, 1782.

I HAVE had many apprehenſions, well or ill founded, but continually great, concerning your health, ſince the laſt letter I received from your majeſty. My German correſpondents have informed me it was not good, and that it has at leaſt ſuffered ſome alteration, during the ſevere winter which is ſaid to have viſited the north. Fortunately the baron von Goltz has calmed my fears, and has aſſured me your majeſty is as well as can be wiſhed. I have therefore only to teſtify my ſatisfaction and joy. This conſolation rewards me for the contrarieties to which my poor machine is ſubjected, and which even begin to make me believe it will perhaps ſoon be neceſſary to pack up, and begone; but health, and life itſelf, to me are nothing, while I have no fears for thoſe of your majeſty.

Your bounty to the young ſtudent, whom I took the liberty to recommend, has increaſed the emulation and ardour which this intereſting youth had before ſhewn. He has, for five months, continually been at the head of his claſs,

claſs, and will uſe every effort to prove himſelf worthy of the favours which your majeſty has been pleaſed to confer on his riſing talents.

What your majeſty has done me the honour to write, relative to the diſpute between Cæſar and the moſt holy father, is full of reaſon, humanity, and juſtice. The poor prieſt, who now drains the Pontine marſhes, is certainly no participator in the follies of Gregory VII. Innocent IV. and a multitude of his predeceſſors. But almighty juſtice has made all mankind accountable for the ſins of an individual; and imperial juſtice will render one accountable for the ſins of many. We have here read the monkiſh remonſtrances of the prieſt, who is elector of Treves, and the very military anſwer of Cæſar Joſeph. I know not whether I be or be not miſtaken, but I do not think Cæſar will ſtop here. Theſe preliminaries ſeem to be what is called ſkirmiſhing before battle. Unfortunately, for holy Peter, there is great odds in the match. All the biſhops of the provinces of Cæſar, whether from policy or pleaſure at no longer being dependent on Rome, are apparently very ſubmiſſive to the imperial mandates. They would be every where the ſame, had monarchs the wit to ſay—*Such is my will*—to animals that are exceedingly reſtive when entreated, but very gentle when

when commanded. The holy father would conſole himſelf for his Germanic diſaſters, with the ſubmiſſion of an Italian, the fidelity of a Spaniard, and the catholicity of a Frenchman; for we ſhall not very ſuddenly ceaſe to have the honour to be exceedingly catholic; nor will the Italians ceaſe to be exceedingly ſubmiſſive, or the Spaniards to be equally faithful.

The Spaniards however, in deſpite of their inquiſition, have lately taken Port Mahon. In my opinion they are more fortunate than ſage; and the Engliſh are ſomewhat more inept than they were in the times of Marlborough, and Pitt. People begin to believe that theſe Spaniards, notwithſtanding their ſucceſſive blunders at the camp of St. Roch, will at laſt take Gibraltar; which place, it muſt be owned, faces them with a grin ſomewhat more horrible than that of Port Mahon. The camp at St. Roch appears to me to be as little effectual as the armed neutrality, the ſerious efforts of which have hitherto been in vain expected to repreſs Engliſh inſolence. It would do better ſtill could it bring the Engliſh to determine on peace, which they have as much need of as we have. But I fear, ſire, this peace is not ſo near as it were to be wiſhed.

Our politicians of the Thuilleries, who ſeldom know what they ſay, ſpeak of a threatened inva-

ſion of the provinces of the venerable ſultan, on the part of two of your neighbours. It would be pleaſant, ſhould Cæſar at once undertake to expel both the pope and the great turk. This to me would be a ſubject of much indifference, provided the repoſe of your majeſty remain undiſturbed, for I wiſh you nothing but repoſe. Who can affirm you have any need of renown?

The planet, or comet, which has long been ſeen in the heavens, perhaps forebodes great political events. Unfortunately there is no certainty that it is a comet; without which, as your majeſty well knows, it would not have the honour to forebode ſo much even as rain, or fair weather. It is vehemently ſuſpected to be a poor planet, the ſmallneſs and diſtance of which have hitherto kept it in obſcurity. More time is yet neceſſary for aſtronomers to aſcertain its rank, and, according to the phraſe, allot it a houſe.

In the mean time, ſire, take care of yourſelf, and deign to continue your bounty toward me, and to receive the homage of that profound reſpect with which I ſhall be, to the end of life, &c.

LET-

LETTER CCXXI.

From the King.

March 17, 1782.

YOUR information, concerning my ſtate of health, was more true than you ſeem to ſuppoſe. I have had a ſevere fit of the gout in my right hand and foot; and, as good reſults from evil, my inability to uſe my right hand has made me have recourſe to my left, with which I have learned to write legibly. This employment, and patience, are all the benefits I have derived from my laſt illneſs. I recal to mind the ſage precepts of the Portico; though I did not exclaim, in the moment of pain, like Poſidonius—"Oh "Gout! Do what thou wilt, I never will "confeſs that thou art an evil." I am ſatisfied with ſupporting pain without complaining, or denying its exiſtence.

I am ſorry to hear you have ſuffered by the gravel, while I have been confined by the gout. Of this we muſt accuſe age. Time, which has deſtroyed the temple of Jupiter at the Capitol, and left no veſtige of the tower of Babel, whoſe head, as you know, was in the clouds; time, I ſay, will much more eaſily debilitate, and fret

away, ſprings ſo fragile as are thoſe which give motion to the human body. Yet does the clay, of which we are manufactured, longer reſiſt deſtruction than iron itſelf, notwithſtanding its hardneſs. You muſt know I inquired how long clocks, which are placed in church ſteeples, remain before they are worn out, and was told, to my great aſtoniſhment, they muſt be entirely renewed once in twenty years. Ruſt eats the parts, and occaſions the ſprings to break, by which motion is ſtopped; for this reaſon we two, who have been impertinent enough to live longer than the duration of three clocks of iron, ought not to think it ſtrange that the machine is out of order, and that its infirmities preſage approaching diſſolution.

All things inform us of the reign of mutability, over the globe. Rome, imperious and apoſtolic Rome, is ſinking under her rebellious children, who refuſe obedience, uncloiſter the *cuculati*, appropriate their goods and chattels to themſelves, and inſolently ſhake off the yoke of purgatory. Chriſt's earthly vicar is going to Vienna, to make honourable amends at the foot of the Imperial throne; and you every where hear heretics exclaiming—"Rightly did we ſay that "the whore of Babylon was not infallible; were "Braſchi ſo he would not be guilty of the folly

"of

"of ſo ineffectual and ſo ill-timed a ſtep." For my part, heretic though I be, I pity the Abbé of the ſouth, as the prince de Ligne calls him, ſeeing him thus in his preſent deſolate ſituation; he falls the victim of the audacious effrontery of his predeceſſors.

The abbé Raynal ſuffers a ſimilar fate. He is, at preſent, in one of the fearful dungeons of the Baſtille; after having, ſcarcely ſix months ago, been ſeated beſide the Cæſar Joſeph, and dining in company with the monarch at Spa. I thought that to have converſed, once during life, with a *caput orbis*, was a ſufficient ſafeguard againſt opprobrium. But it ſeems that, in this perverſe age, there is no place of refuge for the ignoble againſt the caprice of fortune. Oh, Solomon! Wert thou to reviſit earth, thou wouldſt of need confeſs many new things have happened, in our days, which thou didſt neither ſee nor foreſee, and which will be productive of many others.

With reaſon do I abandon the future to vague chance; all I require, from our good mother Nature, is the preſervation of the ſage Anaxagoras; and to their evil deſtiny I commit Braſchi, Raynal, the ſucceſſors of Kouli-Kan, the ſons of Loyola, the capuchins, and the Engliſh.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CCXXII.

From the King.

March 23, 1782.

NO, my dear Anaxagoras, my philoſophic zeal did not vent itſelf againſt you, who are a true ſage, but againſt thoſe blockheads who, aſſuming the ſpecious title of philoſophers, take upon themſelves to create a world according to their whims, and at the concluſion too of the eighteenth century. I had taken it for granted, from the progreſs of good ſenſe, that ſcience would at leaſt have undeceived thoſe who ſcruti-niſe nature, relative to former abſurd opinions, on the origin which folly has attributed to the world. But our author haughtily enters the liſts, and overturns every ſyſtem he attacks, eſpecially that of Buffon. Whenever I find my gentleman erecting his own hypotheſis, by a capricious and incompatible mixture of that of Deſcartes and that of Newton, and perceive him creating and arranging the univerſe by his almighty word, inſtead of admiring this potent creator, I conſign him to the hoſpital for lunatics.

Whoever has well examined the ſubject muſt allow that, if we pay reſpect to the fundamental axioms

axioms of reaſon, we cannot of neceſſity but admit the eternity of the earth. The ſyſtem of creation is encumbered at every ſtep by abſurdities; the *ex nihilo nihil eſt*, which all antiquity reſpected, muſt be denied; we muſt perſuade ourſelves that an incorporeal being, though of ſuch we can form no idea, has produced, and acted upon, without coming into contact with, matter; two contradictory opinions muſt be aſſociated; the one that God is good, and perfect, and the other that he has been pleaſed to create a deteſtable world. The philoſopher of Bedlam deſpiſes ſuch trifling difficulties; he daringly bounds over the abyſs of incomprehenſibility; but the rays of truth melt his artificial wings, and he, like Icarus, is plunged into an ocean of contradictions, in which the little good ſenſe that was left him is drowned. Forgive me this rather too poetical a compariſon, which is a little in the ſtyle of Balzac; but you will read it with indulgence, when you reflect that, full of the declamations of the Pariſian creator, and with my imagination heated by his ſtyle, ſome trifling imitation has eſcaped me in this letter.

All here is tranquillity; we create nothing, but ſatisfy ourſelves with enjoying that which is created; and, while the emperor is wrangling with the pope, and you with the Engliſh, I, like

Diogenes, roll my tub, that I may not be ſingular in indolence.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CCXXIII.

From the King.

April 26, 1782.

NO, my dear Anaxagoras, you have not entered into the ſpirit of my letter. God forbid that I ſhould be angry with you, for having ſent me this new ſyſtem of philoſophy. A ſage, like you, is in no wiſe concerned in what enflamed my zeal. I have been in a paſſion with the author only. I cannot pardon him for having, at the end of the eighteenth century, attempted to depart from experiment, and wander in the labyrinth of chimera, which his imagination had conjured up. What will become of Philoſophy, if we leave the ſage path which has been traced out for her, and ſhould we deprive her of the ſtaff of analogy, and of that of experiment, by which to find her road? Should the book of this madman become faſhionable, we ſhould immediately have a number of young lunatics, who would but retail their paradoxes, that they might

might gain readers. Philoſophy would, as formerly in Athens, fall into the hands of ſophiſts; and to the moſt evident truths an obſcure jargon would be ſubſtituted, and metaphyſical and tortured phraſes, by which France would again be plunged in ignorance.

I have an affection for the age in which I was born, and I abhor whatever threatens, once more, to hurry its ſucceſſors into barbariſm. When ambitious monks perſecute philoſophers, and riſe in oppoſition to truths that have been beſt demonſtrated by the apoſtles of reaſon, they do not meet my approbation. Yet I perceive they act according to principles of intereſt, by which they are incited to lord it over mankind. But when pretended philoſophers themſelves ſap the foundation of the moſt acknowledged truths, when they degrade philoſophy as much as they are able, and when they conjure up the errors of our anceſtors, theſe things indeed are unpardonable. This was what ſtirred up my bile; and whoever delight to ſee mankind enlightened will, when they read this book, feel like ſenſations of indignation riſe againſt its author.

You tell me of another book, which you have had the goodneſs to ſend me, but which I have not yet received. I requeſt you would thank the perſons who have been pleaſed to preſent it

to me. The reputation of the college of Mazarin has long been eſtabliſhed. The Jeſuits had able profeſſors. Rhetoric was treated in a ſuperior manner at Port-Royal. Paſcal, Racine, Arnaud and Nicole were people of great merit, and pupils of that ſchool. I could wiſh, for the conſolation of my old age, I might ſee ſome plants ſprout up, ſuch as ſhould ſupply thoſe by whom the laſt century was honoured. Great men ſeem to die childleſs; I could wiſh there were a race of ſuperior ſouls, whoſe deſcendants might inceſſantly fill up the vacant places.

But what matters it to me? I ſhall ſoon be gone. I have enjoyed the pure ore of the age of Louis XIV. and I thank Heaven for having ſent me into the world at ſuch a time. That we may comfort ourſelves reſpecting the future, it is neceſſary to ſay—*when I am gone another deluge*. The world is a theatre of perpetual viciſſitude, the ſcene of which is eternally changing. Here arts, ſciences, and empires riſe; and there barbariſm ſucceeds to learning, and to the potentates whoſe thrones are trampled in the duſt.

You French folks are not idle. You are ſapping the foundations of the Britiſh throne, with tolerable ſucceſs. The Engliſh nation, ſaid to be ſo profound, has had ſuperficial miniſters, who have ſtript it of its ſuperfluous wealth, which

which it turned to abuſe, and occaſioned it to loſe poſſeſſions which were but its burthen. They have bravely laboured for its abaſement, intending, no doubt, to temper the exceſs to which it carried its haughtineſs, and the diſdain in which it had held the reſt of Europe. A hundred years hence, he, among our cotemporaries, who ſhould riſe from the dead, would no longer know our continent. In the mean time, I wiſh you health, proſperity, and content.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CCXXIV.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, May 3, 1782.

I RECEIVED, almoſt at the ſame time, the two letters your majeſty was pleaſed to write to me, in anſwer to two letters which I had the honour to addreſs to your majeſty. By the firſt of the anſwers your majeſty has deigned to ſend, I perceive you have this winter been attacked, as you have been almoſt every preceding winter, by that accurſed gout which, while it

made you ſuffer with the patience of Epictetus, did not prevent you from being as merry as Democritus; yet without having indulged in the ſtoic and abſurd pride of not regarding gout as an evil. I lately read the morals of Epictetus, which are too gigantic for nature, and formed for imaginary men*. Of this fine diſplay, which is ſo ill adapted to our feeble nature, I ſay as our good La Fontaine, convert though he was to the vicar of his pariſh, ſaid of the epiſtles of St. Paul, to his confeſſor—"Your "Saint Paul is no man for me."

The philoſophy of your majeſty is more true, becauſe it is more ſuitable to human nature, and more worthy of the real ſage; who ſees evil and good ſuch as they are, who enjoys the latter, and endures the former, without ſelf-praiſe, or murmuring at his fate. I profit according to the beſt of my abilities by the leſſons, and eſpecially by the example, of your majeſty; and, when my diſeaſe makes me recollect pain is no joke, again and again read the letters of the philoſophic king, in which I find eaſe and conſolation. His holineſs then is at length at Vienna, adminiſtering the ſacrament to Cæſar,

* Let not the young reader take this for granted. T.

who

who laughs at him, and who will ſend him back as wiſe as he came. He has had no other ſatisfaction than that of ſuffering the capuchins, and pretty women, to kiſs his mule, and of beſtowing plenty of benedictions on the mob. Would that Gregory VII. and the emperor Henry IV. were ſpectators of the ſight; would they ſaw the progreſs which reaſon has made, during a period of ſeven hundred years. That the period is long I grant; ſtill however reaſon has been progreſſive; like the hour hand of a watch, without any ſenſible motion, it has continually advanced and now bids fair to complete its revolution. Let the holy Roman-apoſtolic and catholic church beware of the concluſion of theſe events; I know not whether the ſucceſſor of Saint Peter have aſſumed to himſelf the title of the Abbé of the South, during his travels, but, in my opinion, he has made this excellent journey to go in ſearch, according to the proverb, of noon at two o'clock *.

Your majeſty has not been informed of the exact truth, relative to the abbé Raynal; he has indeed been condemned by our lords of the

* There is a play upon the word *midi*, which ſignifies both noon and the ſouth, which cannot be tranſlated. The French proverb is however preſerved, becauſe the ſpirit of a proverb but ſeldom *totally* evaporates in tranſlation. T.

parliament,

parliament, more ignorant than the Sorbonne, and more intolerant than the capuchins; but, anticipating the dreadful ſentence, the abbé Raynal took refuge beyond the confines of France. He is neither in the priſons of the Chatelet nor the Baſtille; but in ſafety at Bruſſels, or elſewhere; for he is ſaid at preſent to be travelling through Germany, and that he has even been exceedingly well received by a venerable prelate, the elector of Mentz. I imagine he will not, during his journey, forget to viſit the philoſophic monarch, who better deſerves viſiting than all the electors, and even all the Cæſars. Nor do I doubt but your majeſty will conſole him, for all the perſecutions he has endured, from fanaticiſm. The fate of our new planet, or comet, is ſtill undecided, and his *houſe* is difficult of diſcovery. We begin to believe however that a planet he will remain, at twice the diſtance of Saturn from the ſun, and performing his revolution in eighty-two years. Time will tell us more, but this is all I can inform your majeſty of at preſent.

What do you ſay to the ſurrender of Port Mahon, taken almoſt without ſtriking a blow, by a general of no great abilities, and the commander of Spaniſh ſoldiers? It was decreed that this place ſhould be taken by poor generals; by

by Richelieu firſt, and next by Crillon. This Crillon is the father of him whom, ſome years ſince, your majeſty ſaw at Berlin, with the prince de Salm. It is ſaid the ſiege of Gibraltar will be committed to him, but he may find this a morſel more hard of digeſtion. We muſt place our hopes however in providence, and eſpecially in the Engliſh miniſtry, by recollecting the accumulated blunders they are guilty of, by ſea and by land. May like blunders, often repeated, oblige them to make peace! For, with reſpect to ourſelves, we aſk nothing more.

Your majeſty has done me juſtice in thinking me very innocent of the ſpleen which you caught, by reading that wretched book on philoſophy which it was thought proper to ſend you as coming from me. You ſhould by this have received another book, which I have had the honour to ſend you; but have taken care to inform you it is a book not proper to be read by you; and that it is merely a mark of reſpect, from the univerſity of Paris, where the philoſophic monarch is held in admiration; and a teſtimony of gratitude, for the encouragement you have been pleaſed to give to one of her ſtudents.

I am, with the moſt profound and the moſt tender reſpect, &c.

LET-

LETTER CCXXV.

From the King.

May 18, 1782.

TO me it has happened as to you, reſpecting the morality of the ſtoics, which I have admired, while I have been grieved that their very reſpectable ſage was an imaginary being of reaſon. The following fine line, by Voltaire, is very applicable to this ſubject.

Tes deſtins ſont d'un homme, et tes vœux ſont d'un Dieu *.

Whatever love we may have for mankind, no legiſlator, no philoſopher can ever change the nature of things. It is probable our ſpecies muſt neceſſarily be ſuch as we find it to be; a ſtrange mixture of good and ill qualities. Education, and ſtudy, may extend the ſphere of our knowledge; a good government may form hypocrites, who may put on the maſk of virtue; but never will either be able to alter the nature of the mind. I regard man as a machine, ſubject to ſprings that direct his motions; and what we call wiſdom, or reaſon, is nothing more than the fruit of experience, which, influencing our

* Thy acts are human, but thy thoughts divine.

hopes

hopes and fears, determines our actions. This doctrine, my dear Anaxagoras, is rather humiliating to self-love; but, unfortunately, it is but too true.

Be these things as they may I esteem the stoics, and thank the sect, with a most grateful heart, for having produced such men as Lelius, Cato of Utica, Epictetus, and especially Marcus Aurelius. None of the other philosophic sects can vaunt of such disciples; and I wish, for the good of Europe, the race were not extinct. It is vexatious that all people in pain are obliged unequivocally to give Zeno the lie; there are none of them who do not allow that pain is a very great evil.

I much wish our good mother Nature would dispense with putting you to the grievous task of producing pyrenees, and alps, in your kidnies; yet this is too serious an evil to be joked with; especially while you suffer, you whom Parnassus, and all thinking beings, wish to see live eternally. I therefore hope to hear that this vile disease does not grow worse, and that your friends may flatter themselves they may still, for many years, enjoy your company.

What shall I say to you of the holy father? His infallibility is lost, since he has thought proper to go to Vienna, there to be a spectator

of his own degradation. With reſpect to Auſtria, the buſineſs is over; but you French people will not imitate the conduct of the emperor. There is more ſuperſtition in your country than in any kingdom of Europe. Your prieſts have uſurped an authority which is a counterpoiſe to that of the ſovereign; nor will your king dare to form any plan againſt ſo powerful a body, without firſt having taken the moſt ſage meaſures, to give ſucceſs to ſo bold an attempt. Therefore, all things well conſidered, the provinces of the emperor will alone profit by this ſchiſm of the church; and other ſovereigns will want courage, wiſdom, or means, to follow the example. Do not however flatter yourſelf that we ſhall live to ſee reaſon the ruler of mankind; recollect that it is not long ſince a German prince cauſed maſſes to be ſaid on the belly of his conſort, from a perſuaſion ſhe would become pregnant. Know that a ſect in Saxony invokes the dead, like the witch of Endor; and know likewiſe that the free-maſons form, in their lodges, a religious ſect more abſurd, and this is a bold ſaying, than any ſect at preſent exiſting.

Such is poor human nature, and ſuch will it be to the end of time. Follies, fables, and the marvellous will ever be victorious over reaſon,

and

and truth. Well might Fontenelle ſay that, had he his hand full of truths, he would not open it, that they might fly abroad, becauſe the world was unworthy of truth.

Do you know what has happened to me this very day? I, who imagined the abbé Raynal was ſhut up in ſome dungeon of your inquiſition, ſaw him make his entrance here. He is to come to me this afternoon, nor will I quit him while he has any thing more to ſay. Yes! I have ſeen the author of—The Stadtholderſhip, and of the Commerce of Europe*. His knowledge is great, for which he is indebted to the curious reſearches he has made. I thought I was converſing with providence itſelf. Governments are all weighed in his ſcale; and it would be to riſk baniſhment to modeſtly dare to affirm, in his preſence, that the trade of any power is ſome millions more lucrative than he has declared it to be. Whether the ſtatements collected by him have all the authenticity which is requiſite, on ſuch ſubjects, remains to be known.

You ſpeak to me of Europe, and I tell you I keep rolling my tub, as Diogenes did during the troubles of Greece. The North is ardently deſirous of peace. Notwithſtanding maritime aſſociations, and the code of Catherine, relative

* *Du Stathouderat et du Commerce de l'Europe.*

to the empire of Neptune, his dominions continue to ſuffer the ſame moleſtation, by the heavy inſurances which privateering obliges trade to pay.

A great genius, who lives up five pair of ſtairs in ſome ſtreet of the fauxbourg Saint Germain, and who there ſeated deſpotically governs Europe, has lately addreſſed an excellent project for a general pacification to me. The ſpirit of the abbé de Saint Pierre has deſcended upon him, with policy ſo profound as to be worthy of Gargantua. France ſwarms with great men who labour, in their obſcurity, for its utmoſt benefit. Pity it is that men of ſuch rare genius ſhould not have a few kingdoms to burn; I would ſay to govern.

But, happen what will to Europe, I ſhall be ſatisfied with wiſhing health to the ſage Anaxagoras. We will enter into a league, for our departure from this vale of miſery, that we may travel together, in order to become nothing.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CCXXVI.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, June 21, 1782.

THAT which your majeſty has done me the honour to write, on the high and exaggerated philoſophy of the ſtoics, is beyond compariſon better adapted to my purpoſe than philoſophy ſo imaginary and gigantic. I, like your majeſty, never will grant, with theſe gentlemen, that pain is not an evil; and my wretched diſeaſe but too frequently, and every day, tells me they are liars. I ſhould willingly ſay, as king Alphonſo did of the world, that, had God aſked my opinion, when he fabricated the veſica of man, I certainly ſhould have given him good advice. I am not however worſe than I was two months ago; but I continually, and with reaſon, fear that my malady will increaſe with age. To comfort myſelf, I repeat the line of Racine—

Je ne veux point prévoir les malheurs de ſi loin *.

I dwell too long on this dull ſubject, on which I have only ſpoken in anſwer to the kind inquiries of your majeſty. May you, ſire, live in

* Far diſtant miſery let me not behold.

health, and free from pain, and then let me ſuffer all that it ſhall pleaſe nature to inflict. I ſhall be ſatisfied, or at leaſt ſhall be conſoled.

His holineſs ſeems to me to have put a good face on a bad cauſe, as the ſaying is. He has beſtowed great praiſes on the *piety* of his imperial majeſty, and adminiſtered the ſacrament to him on Holy Thurſday, according to the gazettes. Much good may it all do him! What will become of the ſuppreſſed monaſteries is yet to be known. Some letters from Germany, and particularly from Flanders, appear to entertain doubts of the entire accompliſhment of his imperial, and anti-monaſtic, project. It is pretended that, ſince his interview with the pope, the demolition of the ſuppreſſed monaſteries proceeds ſlowly. So much the worſe for him, if this be true: it were better he ſhould have done nothing, than do what he has begun by halves.

I ſhould be much more intereſted, ſire, had we the fortitude, in France, to imitate ſuch a reform. Alas, as your majeſty well ſays, we ſhall do no ſuch a thing; but, while we deſpiſe prieſts, and monks, we ſhall pay them the honour of dreading and ſparing them. We have long ſince written the fineſt things poſſible, on the ſubject; but we only write, and do not act.

Others

Others act, and do not write. In this we imitate our conduct in war, and muſic; we ſcribble books, and do nothing more.

But, a propos of war, what does your majeſty think of our defeat near the Antilles? The affair of the twelfth of April is, in my opinion, the maſter-piece of ignorance, and French bravado. God grant us that peace of which we have ſo much need! Nor have our enemies much leſs; for their blunders nearly equal ours. Perhaps peace would ſoon be concluded, did it not pleaſe the grand protector of the inquiſition obſtinately to continue this delightful ſiege of Gibraltar; before which place the Spaniſh nation, and their king, have for four ſucceſſive years acquired ſuch ſplendid renown!

Your majeſty appears to me to have rightly judged the abbé Raynal; he is too ſure of himſelf, in every thing he advances; and tells almoſt every ſovereign, and every ſtate in Europe, that he is better acquainted than they themſelves are with their ſtrength, and their revenues. His work, in other reſpects, is uſeful, and has acquired him among foreigners, and even in his own country, a degree of celebrity which rewards him for the perſecution he has ſuffered, from fanatics. I am informed that he is enraptured with your majeſty, and this I can very

readily believe. I, from experience, know that you diſmiſs all that have the happineſs to approach you in the ſame temper.

During a month, the *comte and comteſſe du Nord** have been here. They departed two days ago for Breſt, and appeared well ſatisfied with their reſidence at Paris, and the eager welcome with which they were received by all ranks. On their own part, they were very ſucceſsful by the politeneſs with which they accoſted every perſon. The *comte du Nord* did me the honour to viſit me, even before I had taken the liberty to pay him my reſpects. He ſaid the moſt flattering things on the deſire they had *to poſſeſs me* at Peterſburg, ſuch were the terms in which he was pleaſed to expreſs himſelf, and of his individual regret not to ſee me there. I am exceedingly ſenſible of this regret; but I far from repent, and now perhaps leſs than ever, that I did not accept the offers that were made me; nor ſhall I during life forget that converſation, ſo intereſting to me, which I had with your majeſty, on this ſubject, at Cleves, in 1763.

Receive, ſire, with your uſual bounty, the moſt ſincere homage of that tender veneration with which I ſhall, all my life, &c.

* The travelling names of the grand duke, and ducheſs, of Ruſſia. T.

P. S.

P. S. I know not whether your majeſty have received the work, which I had the honour to ſend you, on the part of the college of Louis the Great, and the univerſity of Paris; not to be read, but as a mark of their profound reſpect, and of their lively gratitude.

LETTER CCXXVII.

From the King.

July 5, 1782.

I OWN, after having well ſtudied the opinions of the ſtoics, they appear to me to have too much exalted human nature. They were perſuaded by vanity that each poſſeſſed, in himſelf, a part of the ſoul of nature; which part, they thought, might attain the perfections of the Deity whom it was to rejoin, after the death of the body which it had animated. The ſyſtem is beautiful and ſublime; it wants nothing but truth.

However, there is dignity in riſing ſuperior to the vexatious events to which men are liable; and ſtoiciſm, not carried to exceſs, is the ſole reſource of the unfortunate. Still we muſt be careful not to ſwell ourſelves with a ſuppoſed perfection,

perfection, at which we never can arrive; nor ought we to compoſe an imaginary genealogy, which, far from ennobling, degrades us; becauſe when we conſider the turpitude and crimes of our ſpecies, it is more probable to ſuppoſe us the deſcendants of evil beings, if ſuch exiſt, than of a being the very nature of whom ought to be goodneſs. But, whenever gout, ſtone, or the bull of Phalaris interfere, the piercing cries that eſcape the patient atteſt that pain is a moſt real evil. I hope your diſeaſe will no longer oblige you to give the lie to the ſtoics. My ſoul has taught me, by experience, that ſhe is the very humble ſervant of my body; and, as often as that ſuffers, ſhe is very ill at her eaſe; ſo much are intellectual faculties ſubjected by the mechaniſm of man's organization.

What a ſtride! From the ſtoics to his holineſs the pope! But, having made it, I will continue my road. This poor prieſt has proved the falſity of his infallibility, by his journey to Vienna, and has expoſed himſelf to meet the refuſal, which he might have expected. The emperor continues his ſecularizations without intermiſſion; and it appears that rich monaſteries are preferred to the beggarly. The latter are not moleſted, although the public good demanded their reform in preference to the others. I very

much doubt that France will imitate the auguſt Germanic Cæſar; or not at leaſt till your comptroller-general ſhall have exhauſted every reſource of his induſtry, to ſupply the funds of government. In Pruſſia, things remain in their former ſtate; for I reſpect the right of poſſeſſion, on which all ſociety is founded.

We are here informed of the defeat of the comte de Graſſe, who ſhewed great valour during the battle, which to him was ſo unſucceſsful. The marine of England appears greatly ſuperior, in manœuvring, to that of France. Your countrymen want exerciſe, and experience, by the aid of which they might arrive at perfection, were they encouraged to apply themſelves, and were they thus buſied in time of peace.

I perceive, with pleaſure, you were ſatisfied with the grand duke, and with the viſit which he paid you. He is a prince who poſſeſſes great and good qualities. He is inclined to be grave, which is a part of his character; but this character is in reality excellent.

The abbé Raynal is ſtill at Berlin, there collecting materials to write the hiſtory of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The work will appear too late. In 1680, it would have been proper to have demonſtrated, to Louis XIV. how infinite was the injury his kingdom would

would ſuffer, by the expulſion of a prodigious number of inhabitants, who bore their induſtry with them, into every part of Europe. The French at preſent are ſenſible of this, when it can no longer be remedied.

I believe I thanked you, in one of my former letters, for the work from the college of Louis the Great, which you ſent me. I give you notice of a new work on * * *. How long will men have the folly to continue to write their ſtupid dreams on ſuch a ſubject? I adhere to the general and permanent laws which all the elements obey, and theſe to me are ſufficient. Live, my dear D'Alembert, for the honour of philoſophy, and let me occaſionally hear from you.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CCXXVIII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, Auguſt 9, 1782.

FROM the public papers I learn the death of the queen-dowager of Sweden, your majeſty's ſiſter, your attachment to whom muſt have rendered you highly ſenſible of her loſs;

and I entreat your majeſty will remain perſuaded of my participation in your juſt grief. This reſpectable princeſs had formerly even honoured me by her favours, and made me a member of an academy which ſhe had formed in her palace, and which the unfortunate troubles of the kingdom would not allow to ſubſiſt; therefore, from gratitude to her memory, from my attachment, ſire, to your auguſt houſe, and eſpecially from the tender and reſpectful intereſt I take in whatever can affect your majeſty, I cannot but owe that juſt regret to the loſs of the queen of Sweden which I lay at the feet of my benefactor.

Having acquitted myſelf of this duty, or rather after this ſincere expanſion of heart, it becomes me to anſwer the excellent philoſophic letter with which your majeſty has honoured me, on the affliction I endure. How much truth and wiſdom is there in all you have ſaid of the philoſophy of the ſtoics, which is rather grand than natural, and very little proper, with its high ſounding phraſes, and inflated principles, to alleviate the feelings of the ſuffering! Fortunately, I begin to have leſs need of the aid of this ſtrange pharmacopeia. My pain is much decreaſed, and has almoſt left me, thanks to *the diſeaſe of the north*; which, giving me a violent cold,

cold, and a ſevere fit of the rheumatiſm, has removed the ſeat of pain from the veſica to the breaſt, and limbs. God grant that this may be ſomething more than a truce; and that, when my cold ſhall be gone, the enemy may not return to his former camp, from which he annoyed me ſo much!

I detain your majeſty too long on the ſubject of my own wretchedneſs; let me rather inform you that your good health comforts me for my own ſickly ſtate; and that, as I am aſſured by all thoſe who have ſeen you, ſire, it promiſes to yourſelf, and to Europe, many future years of a life which never can be too long, for the good of your people, the peace of Germany, and the honour and the ſupport of philoſophy; eſpecially of one who, though the leaſt of philoſophers, is the firſt and moſt zealous of your admirers.

This philoſophy, ſire, has more than ever need of protectors, and examples, like yourſelf. It is at this moment exhibited, in a ſilly and indecent manner, on the French ſtage; and the farce, which degrades its authors only, has the honour to meet with important protectors, who in their hearts ſuſpect philoſophy holds them in profound contempt; although they do not vaunt of their ſuſpicions, but by the penetration of their

their great wit they have imagined the fact, and endeavoured to be revenged, by means as worthy of themſelves from their nature as from their ſucceſs.

Your majeſty reaſons well on the proceedings of the Cæſar Joſeph, who ſpares the begging friars, thoſe night-mares of the ſtate, and of the people. The indolent-wealthy, and the indolent-beggar, ought alike to be eradicated. In France, we only concern ourſelves with the farces of our ſhow booths, and are ignorant of the progreſs of the Imperial ſuppreſſion, and the orders iſſued againſt the monaſtic crew. It is rumoured that the biſhops and monks had formed a conſpiracy againſt the emperor, which had been timely diſcovered. I nevertheleſs think that the whole race is much leſs to be feared than it appears to be, by a prince who poſſeſſes three hundred thouſand men, and unſhaken reſolution; that the church is highly honoured while thus feared; and that ſhe never can injure any, except thoſe who have the weakneſs to ſtand in awe of her power. I am well convinced that, ſhould your majeſty reduce her to reaſon for any folly ſhe ſhould attempt to commit, you might walk unarmed in the middle of a proceſſion, without the leaſt cauſe of apprehenſion. The proceſſion of the league would never

never have had equal advantages, under any monarch, except ſuch a one as was Henry III.; and certainly not under a ſovereign like Frederic.

We have been told that the abbé Raynal has been ſeriouſly ill. I wiſh he may live long enough to conclude his uſeful work, on the revocation of the edict of Nantes. Alas! Well may your majeſty ſay the work will appear too late, for the happineſs of France. Still it may ſerve as inſtruction, and example, to unfortunate princes; who, in the ſucceſſion of ages, may venture to commit ſimilar abſurdities. Perhaps it will prove the folly of our preſent laws, as they relate to proteſtant ſubjects, who are ſtill induced from the love of their country to remain in France, though under the dread of ſeeing their unfortunate children declared illegitimate, and deprived of the rights of citizens. Oh what a diſgrace it is, to our age, that it is neceſſary we ſhould, in France, believe in tranſubſtantiation (a word fearful to pronounce, or to write) before we can have any claim to the inheritance of our fathers!

Our princes are gone to Gibraltar. I ſhould be better pleaſed, both in behalf of Spain and France, to ſee your majeſty there. I ſhould be more certain of the ſucceſs of the ſiege, which will

will have continued, even ſhould it be taken, almoſt as long as the ſiege of Troy. But the Spaniards are no Greeks. On the 28th of this month, it is affirmed, nine hundred and ninety pieces of artillery will endeavour to lay the rock in ruins. God ſend them ſucceſs; and, more eſpecially, may God grant peace to thoſe who have ſo much need of it, and who ſo ill underſtand how to make war!

I am, with the moſt profound and the moſt tender veneration, &c.

LETTER CCXXIX.

From the King.

September 8, 1782.

I AM obliged to you for the part you take in the loſs which my family has lately ſuffered. Were we to judge from what we ſee, it ſhould appear that the evil tun of Jupiter is more vaſt, and full, than that from which he diſpenſes his favours on the earth: ten ill accidents for one good. There are perſons who voluntarily rid themſelves of life, but I am acquainted with none who die of grief. When misfortunes which regard only ourſelves overwhelm us, it is the

pride of vanity to oppoſe them by fortitude; but, when we ſuffer loſſes which eternity itſelf cannot repair, there is nothing remaining in the bottom of Pandora's box for our conſolation; except, to a man of my age, the firm perſuaſion we ſhall ſoon rejoin thoſe who have gone before us. It muſt be owned man is rather a feeling than a rational animal. A ſtoic would ſay, to the wounded heart—"Thou oughteſt to be in-"ſenſible to pain." But I feel it in my own deſpite; it waſtes, it diſtracts me. An interior ſenſation, too potent for my will, wrings from me complaints, and ineffectual regret. I ſhall ſpeak no more on the melancholy ſubject, which can engender none but melancholy and gloomy thoughts.

I abandon every thing which relates to literature in your country, except the abbé Deliſle, the only perſon you poſſeſs, in my opinion, who is worthy the age of Louis XIV; and I trouble myſelf little concerning your theatre, your farces, your Ramponet, or all your merry-andrews. The cloſe of this century has no reſource, for the acquirement of fame, except in phyſicks, in which it has made curious reſearches. Could the abſurdities of theological metaphyſics have been annihilated, they would have been by the thunderbolts of philoſophy. Take notice however that,

our

our ſpecies being formed with an inclination almoſt irreſiſtible for ſuperſtition and the marvellous, monks and ſoothſayers have found but little difficulty in filling the mind with that diſguſting maſs of abſurdities by which they govern it. The vulgar, who are every where moſt numerous, always ſuffer themſelves to be led by knaves and impoſtors, who are the inventors of and commentators on puerile fables; whereas the number of ſages will ever remain ſmall. The multitude of the fooliſh muſt, therefore, ever prevail over the few thinking beings who have the wiſdom to employ their reaſon.

While the emperor pulls down monaſteries, I build up catholic churches that have been burnt; leaving each man to think as he ſhall pleaſe, and believing that what Fontenelle ſaid, of his handful of truths, was ſagely ſaid; for the many were unworthy his attention. This unfortunately is but too true. An aſs bends beneath the burthen, when overloaded; but an enthuſiaſt bears whatever weight the prieſt ſhall think proper to lay upon him; nor does he perceive the unworthy manner in which he is degraded.

With reſpect to the preſent wars, I think like you, and ſhould applaud the prodigious efforts

of the belligerent powers, were all their immenſe preparations to be quickly productive of peace.

I have been three weeks abſent, during which I have heard nothing of the abbé Raynal. He has been with my brother, as I am told, but I know no more.

May the hooping-cough, or *the diſeaſe of the North*, cure you of all your infirmities; and may neither the kidneys nor the lungs load you with thoſe afflictions which render life burthenſome, and inſupportable.

On which I pray, &c.

I fear my letter will not add to your mirth; have a little patience, and time will do that which reaſon has vainly endeavoured to effect.

LETTER CCXXX.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, October 11, 1782.

WELL may your majeſty ſay that the evil tun of Jupiter, from which he ſcatters woes over mankind, is much greater, and better repleniſhed, than that from which he diſperſes good. My wretched veſica makes me too ſenſible of this; for my ſufferings during a month have

have been great, inſomuch that inflammation has been feared. I have committed myſelf to the guidance of the moſt able phyſician of France, and at preſent either he or nature has given me eaſe. God knows how long this will continue.

But wherefore entertain your majeſty with my afflictions? Rather let me inform you, or in other words repeat, all that I have felt for near forty years, when I firſt began to receive your favours. The letters with which you are pleaſed to honour me are new proofs, which are to me the more precious, becauſe, in my preſent condition, I no longer can hope to travel and pay my perſonal homage to you. Theſe letters at leaſt conſole me for the ills I feel; and pay, in part, the good of which I am deprived, in not hearing that, from the mouth of your majeſty, which you have the bounty to write. I will venture to ſay that this age, which long, and with ſo much juſtice, has called you the philoſophic king, does not know ſo well as I do how truly you deſerve the title. It has not, like me, the advantage of reading, in your letters, that true, ſound, and uſeful, morality with which they abound; morality which every man may put in practice, and not gigantic, and exaggerated, like that of the ſtoics, and Epictetus; morality which has rendered you greater

in misfortune than even in ſucceſs; in fine, morality which, to me, at once affords inſtruction and example.

I have entreated the marquis d'Eterno, who has lately departed to reſide as ambaſſador from France in Pruſſia, ſhould he find an opportunity, to lay at your majeſty's feet all the ſentiments with which I am penetrated, as well as my grief at being myſelf unable to expreſs them perſonally. The marquis d'Eterno is a prudent, well-bred, virtuous, and enlightened man, with whom I have reaſon to believe your majeſty will be ſatisfied. May he continue to maintain that good intelligence which ſo long has reigned between your majeſty and France; which a woman and an inſignificant prieſt had deſtroyed; and which appears to have nearly recovered its natural ſtate.

Alas! Sire, you are in the enjoyment of peace and glory; but our poor France, at preſent, is deprived of both. What does your majeſty think of the fine attempts that have been made before Gibraltar; of our floating batteries, which threatened ruin, and did not once ſuſpect they might be burnt by red-hot balls? Never perhaps was there a more melancholy example of French levity, and boaſting. What is ſtill worſe, theſe attempts perhaps have made peace

peace more diſtant, neceſſary though it be to us, and our enemies. We do not however deſpair but that it may be concluded this winter, remembering the inability of the two nations to continue their murderous occupation; for, when men thus march to murder, they will be paid the price of blood; and money, which is the ſinew of war, is wanted by each nation.

We are told that the abbé Raynal is ſettled in your majeſty's ſtates. It is neceſſary, for his hiſtory of the revocation of the edict of Nantes, that he ſhould write it in a country where he is ſecure from fanatics. Unfortunately, as your majeſty has well obſerved in one of your laſt letters, the book will only ſhew France how vaſt is the wrong ſhe did herſelf by that revocation, which wrong it is too late to repair; but we do not ſo much as endeavour to prevent its conſequences, not even by permitting proteſtants to marry. We ſhall be the laſt to put that which we have written in practice, and which other nations have executed. May God at length enlighten our minds!

Our great lords, in the mean time, commit acts of ſcandalous and incredible bankruptcy. The prince de Rohan Guémené, grand chamberlain to his majeſty, and huſband to the governeſs of the royal children, is become a bankrupt

for not leſs than twenty millions. (Upward of eight hundred thouſand pounds ſterling.) and has brought thouſands of citizens, who entruſted their fortunes in his hands, to beggary. The indignation and the cries of the public, againſt an act ſo abominable, are extreme; but the guilty remains unpuniſhed. All France exclaims he would not ſo remain in Pruſſia; nor would he indeed here, did our monarch liſten only to thoſe principles of juſtice which are native to his mind, and did he not yield to the entreaties of the Rohans, who make the public the ſacrifice of their vanity.

All this will but be, to me, a light evil, while I ſhall have the happineſs to preſerve your majeſty. Let me entreat you to take precautions on the approach of winter, that you may prevent thoſe attacks of the gout by which you are generally tormented, at that ſeaſon of the year; and that you may preſerve a life ſo neceſſary to your people, to Europe, to humanity, philoſophy, letters, and eſpecially to me.

I am, with the moſt tender veneration, &c.

LET-

LETTER CCXXXI.

From the King.

October 30, 1782.

WE muſt reſtore to nature, my dear D'Alembert, by degrees, that which, by degrees, nature gave; and, though your diſeaſe and mine are both very painful, it were better to endure ſuch ſufferings than to feel a defect of memory, and conſequently of thought. The muſes were the daughters of memory, by which we are taught that, without memory, the faculties of the mind all lay dormant. For my part, I am continually at war with my memory, and combating to oblige her to ſtay in her own deſpite, whenever ſhe attempts to eſcape my graſp. All things make us perceive the fragility of our nature, our individual inſignificance, and that eternal oblivion in which we are ſoon to be loſt. Yet, in ſuch a ſituation, have we the effrontery to plume ourſelves on our own conſequence, to make ourſelves almoſt the aſſociates of the deity, and to talk of grandeurs, dignities, majeſty, and a hundred other lunatic whims, which make the hearts of thoſe who ſtudy man, his nature, vanity, and non-entity, revolt.

But

But I quit theſe too cloudy and mournful reflections, to ſpeak on ſubjects leſs gloomy; and firſt of the marquis d'Eterno, who is juſt arrived, and who appears to me a man of excellent qualities, as far as I can judge from a firſt converſation. Our females are exceedingly chagrined, that his lady has not accompanied him; for they hoped that a French lady would be the legiſlatrix of the graces to the Germans, an accompliſhed model that they might ſtudy, who would teach them to lay on the varniſh of faſhion over the ruſticity which they ſtill preſerve, and which takes date from the æra of the Obotrites.

I know not whether it be a ſentiment of equity or want of diſcernment, but no perſon in theſe countries attributes the misfortunes which have befallen the floating batteries of Spain, before Gibraltar, to the French. It is imagined that his catholic majeſty was abſolutely reſolved to take the horns of the moon between his teeth, and that his faithful ſubjects have ineffectually exhauſted every effort to ſatisfy his mad project. Gibraltar however, if not revictualled by the Engliſh, may ſtill fall. Hunger may effect what floating batteries have attempted in vain.

You envy that peace we now enjoy, without recollecting that it is the deſtiny of kingdoms to be alternately actors and ſpectators, on the great ſtage

ſtage where men perform their tragedies. Scarcely had we quitted the boards before you made your entrance; and, ſhould peace be concluded in the weſt, the great Catherine will make herſelf the ſubject of diſcourſe, in regions from which we ſee the ſun forſaking the arms of Amphitrite. The phraſe, poetical as it may appear, is not miſplaced, when it relates to projects which inflame the fancy, and give birth to combinations the moſt vaſt. Thus do amplification and hyperbole become tubes, which enlarge our wretchedneſs, in the eye of imagination. Aſk me not whether the abbé Raynal employ theſe tubes. I know that he is collecting materials, and that he finds, among the refugees, all that information which is neceſſary to him, in order to depict the effects of which the revocation of the edict of Nantes has been productive. He will ſhew the reſult of that falſe ſtep of Louis XIV. and will ſpeak of the loſſes occaſioned by the perſecuting ſpirit of France. But the Sorbonne will reply, with Boſſuet—— "Active inſtrument * of a ready writer and "an induſtrious hand, haſten to rank Louis "with men like Conſtantine and Theodoſius.

* This is a rhetorical figure, borrowed from the Pſalms. "My tongue is the pen of," &c. T.

"Learn

" Learn from Sozomen that, ſince the time " when God firſt raiſed up chriſtian princes, " we have forbidden conventicles; the law has " not permitted heretics to hold public aſſem- " blies. Hence moſt of them have rejoined the " church; and the obſtinate have died without " ſucceſſors, becauſe they no longer could com- " municate with each other, nor propagate their " opinions. The depopulation which a coun- " try ſuffers is a mundane evil; but hearts, di- " vinely enlightened, think thoſe are only real " evils which turn them, and their countrymen, " from the road of ſalvation."

I leave the abbé Raynal to anſwer this fine bombaſt; which may be very ſatisfactory to repentant imbecility, but is not very convincing to the philoſopher.

Our academy has lately acquired a new member, who flies from tribulation, which ſome reaſonable and modeſt phraſes had drawn upon him at Turin. His name is Denina; he is an abbé, and was a profeſſor in the univerſity of Turin. He is probably known to you by his Hiſtory of the Revolutions of Greece, and of Italy. He comes to proclaim that aloud, in Germany, which he ſilently thought, in Italy.

You talk to me of bankrupts, as if bankruptcy were known only at Paris. We at leaſt have

have had one, at the beginning of the year, of no contemptible amount, being not leſs than ſix millions of French livres. (Two hundred and fifty thouſand pounds ſterling.) All things conſidered in proportion, ſix millions are to us as much as twenty to France. Beware leſt the bankrupt prince de Guémené ſhould be the precurſor of a ſtill greater bankruptcy! England, Spain, and France are exhauſted by the preſent war. To this they muſt come at laſt. The whole world are bankrupts in turn. The good chriſtian is a bankrupt to the concupiſcence of the fleſh; the ſick man to voluptuouſneſs; the philoſopher to error; the man with an empty purſe to his creditor. And what is death itſelf, but the laſt act of bankruptcy? Near failure as I am myſelf, I loſe ſight of the charms of the world, and can ſee nothing but illuſion. Whether aſſailed by gout or any other diſeaſe, I know it is only the coachman who is to drive me into the country from which no man returns*; and I wait the moment of departure

* This phraſe, which is a favourite one with the king, is no doubt borrowed from—"The undiſcovered country" &c. in Hamlet; of which play (tranſlated) the Germans are ſo enamoured as to affirm, and almoſt without hyperbole, that there is no accident that can befal man to which a ſuitable apophthegm may not there be found. T.

with entire reſignation, and deſtitute of all fear of futurity. I ſhall diſpute precedency with you, and, as I came firſt into the world, I claim the right of going firſt out of it; aſſuring you that, while life ſhall continue, my prayers ſhall be for your happineſs.

On which, &c.

LETTER CCXXXII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, December 13, 1782.

I HAVE entreated the baron von Goltz to make my very humble excuſe to your majeſty, that I have not had the honour ſooner to anſwer the charming letter which I received from you, dated the 30th of October laſt. My apologies, to my misfortune, are but too well founded. During the greateſt part of the month of November, I have cruelly ſuffered under my accurſed malady. I will not weary your majeſty with a detail of my ſufferings; let it ſuffice to ſay, they are very much decreaſed, and that I ſeize the firſt opportunity, with the permiſſion of pain, to write and to renew my homage, of reſpectful gratitude, to your majeſty; and of every other

other ſentiment which are all ſo juſtly yours, and which I have ſo long vowed to preſerve.

The reflections of your majeſty on all the miſeries to which human nature is ſubject, and on the contraſt between this wretchedneſs, and our pitiable and ridiculous vanity, are well worthy of a philoſophic king, who riſes, on eagle wings, ſuperior to all the fools of our ſpecies. Theſe reflections merit the ſignature of Marcus-Aurelius-Frederic. I am ſorry however if, as your majeſty ſays, you begin to loſe your memory. It is long ſince I began to loſe mine; but memory is more indiſpenſable to a prince than to an obſcure and unconnected individual. May Nature long preſerve this bleſſing for your majeſty, and for the good of ſo many beings to whom you are neceſſary; and may ſhe, at the ſame time, forbear to afflict you with the pangs of diſeaſe, which I wiſh I could relieve you from myſelf, were it even at the expence of additional ſufferings!

I am delighted to find your majeſty thinks the marquis d'Eterno ſuch as I had the honour to deſcribe him; and have good reaſon to believe this opinion will be ſtrengthened, in proportion as he is better known; and that you will find him to be, as he is, ſage, well informed, modeſt, and polite.

I know not to whom muſt be attributed the ill ſucceſs of our floating batteries; nor do I know by what fatality fifty ſhips, French and Spaniſh, have ſuffered thirty-four Engliſh ſhips, two or three times, to paſs and repaſs, under their very noſe, without firing a gun! But I know that this infernal ſiege of Gibraltar, ſo ridiculouſly undertaken, and ſtill more ridiculouſly proſecuted, has been the principal cauſe of our misfortunes, or of our follies; that it has prolonged the war two or three years, and has therefore retarded the advantageous peace which we might have made.

At length, thank Heaven, according to all appearances, we have reaſon to hope this peace will be concluded; it is even ſo ſaid to be at preſent. Praiſed be the fates! Provided the great Catherine and Cæſar Joſeph do not begin new wars, by the invaſion of Turkey. Above all things, may theſe blind fates never engage your majeſty in any ſuch new war, of which your glory has no need, and which muſt be fatal to your health and repoſe!

We have read with edification, in the public papers, your majeſty's declaration, to the catholic clergy of Sileſia, of the *Te Deum* which the Romiſh church has ſung, returning thanks to God, for having found a protector in you, and

of

of the emigration of a poſſe of Auſtrian nuns, who fled to you for aſylum. When your majeſty recommended toleration to ſovereigns, it moſt aſſuredly might have been ſaid that you preached by example; and it might more eſpecially ſo be ſaid in the preſent conjuncture. The Romiſh church, however, will remain neither leſs perſecuting nor intolerant, whenever ſhe ſo can be. Here are our prieſts preſenting a petition to the king, againſt the ſubſcribers to the new edition which is preparing of the works of Voltaire. The petition was addreſſed to the proper perſon, for his majeſty is one of the ſubſcribers. We ſcarcely know whether we ought to laugh or be angry, at ſuch ſtupid folly.

Were the work of the abbé Raynal to be every thing it could be hoped, on the revocation of the edict of Nantes, it will come too late for France. She will not be able to recover, at pleaſure, all ſhe loſt by that abſurd and fatal revocation. I even fear the work will not induce her to commit no more equally abſurd follies, ſhould a proper opportunity preſent itſelf. For when were men reformed by books?

I have no doubt but people become bankrupts in Pruſſia, as well as in other places; but not in a manner ſo monſtrous, ſo atrocious, ſo impudent, ſo ſcandalous, as the prince who is

no longer here called Rohan Guémené, but ***, I repeat, ſire, all France exclaims, under you he would have ſuffered exemplary puniſhment. His only puniſhment with us is the loſs of his places, which it was impoſſible he ſhould keep. A thouſand families perhaps are brought to beggary by this bankruptcy, which is ſaid to amount to near forty millions in France and foreign countries, incluſively. The cries of the ſufferers are vain: the influence of the **** and his creatures is too powerful.

We ſhall ſoon begin the new year, which is the forty-third of your glorious reign, and the thirty-ſeventh of the bounty with which your majeſty has honoured me. May your ſubjects preſerve ſuch a king ſtill forty years longer; and may the ſame bounty conſole me, not forty years more, but, to the end of my life! May you long enjoy the glory you have acquired, and the repoſe which you ſo well have purchaſed!

I am, with the moſt tender veneration, &c.

P. S. An eſtimable man of letters, M. de Villars, has deſired me to preſent a letter from him to your majeſty, and a proſpectus of a journal which he propoſes to print in your territories, at Neufchatel. He entreats the protection of your majeſty, of which he will endeavour to render himſelf worthy.

LET-

LETTER CCXXXIII.

From the King.

December 30, 1780.

YOU give me great pleaſure, by informing me yourſelf of your ſtate of convaleſcence. The moſt afflicting gift Nature ever conferred on man was that of forming a ſtone quarry in his inteſtines. Of all the woes he is condemned to ſuffer, thoſe attendant on the ſtone are the moſt violent, and moſt demand our compaſſion; eſpecially when they alight on people of ſuch merit as Anaxagoras. For my part, I ſoon expect a preſent ſent from madam Gout, who certainly is not one of the moſt amiable of ladies. Alas! My dear D'Alembert, the ſubject of our letters, formerly, was not our own infirmities, nor the progreſs of decay; but each day at preſent ſteals a part of our exiſtence. This brings to my recollection the celebrated ſaying of a Spartan dame, when told that her ſon had been ſlain at the battle of Leuctra—"I did not bring "him into the world to be immortal."

The war which your French and Spaniſh admirals make, at preſent, is in watching for the preſervation of their men; in which they act very rightly, for peace will ſoon be concluded.

Floating batteries was moſt certainly a very heterodox idea, and could not be ſucceſsful. The moſt courageous men may undertake difficult things; but impoſſibilities they abandon to lunatics.

We are, in the eaſt, threatened with a new war. There are ſome who wiſh to place the breech of the puppet Conſtantine* on the ſopha of Muſtapha; and Cæſar Joſeph, it is ſaid, wiſhes to divide the ſpoil. He will be pleaſed with the Houris of the Seraglio; ſuch, at leaſt, is what our intelligence from Vienna relates.

The abbé Raynal is writing on the revocation of the edict of Nantes; and, when the work ſhall be printed, he will ſend it to Louis XIV. by the firſt courier who ſhall take his departure for the Elyſian fields. For my part, I have made it a law to imitate all good actions, ancient and modern, and never to imitate the bad. I ſuffer each man to adore God as he ſhall think proper; and I ſuppoſe each has a right to chooſe the road he intends to travel, into the unknown country of Paradiſe, or Limbo. I am ſatisfied with the freedom of following, in like manner, the impulſe of reaſon and my own mode of thinking; and, provided monks can but by juſt

* The name of the grand duke of Ruſſia. T.

ſhackles be prevented from diſturbing the peace of ſociety, tolerated they muſt be; for ſuch is the will of the people.

Your M. de Villars, who certainly is not the marſhal de Villars, may print whatever he pleaſe at Neufchatel; provided he ſpare the powers that be, and ſhock not the grandees of the earth; a kind of gentry who are very tickliſh, concerning their prerogatives, dignities, and infallibility. You know prieſts call them the earthly images of God, and the fools really believe themſelves ſo to be; for which reaſon, news-writers are under the neceſſity of reſpecting them, and managing their infinite delicacy with the moſt ſcrupulous attention.

Should the earthly image of God, at Verſailles, forbid the publication of the works of Voltaire, the bookſellers of Switzerland, Holland, and Germany, will gain the profits which would have accrued to the bookſellers of France; and your prieſts, act how they will, never will be able, at the cloſe of the eighteenth century, to revive the bleſſed ſtupidity of the year one thouſand. Thinking people, who compare and combine ideas, are much diſabuſed in reſpect to fable. The Sorbonne defends the breaches made in the fortreſs of Folly, and is ſatisfied that the imbecil multitude ſhould ſtill ſuppoſe it invul-

nerable. May good attend you the coming year; and eſpecially may you have no nephritic colic! Take care to ſuſpend your journey till I ſhall be ready to depart.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CCXXXIV.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, February 16, 1783.

FOR the laſt three months I have, with ſome few intervals of eaſe, been under continual pains; more or leſs acute, but always great. I profit, ſire, by one of the leaſt painful intervals to lay thoſe ſentiments at your majeſty's feet which I ſo juſtly owe you, and properly to teſtify my lively gratitude, for the conſolatory letters you have the goodneſs to write to me. They are the beſt balm Charity can pour into my wounds, and the only alleviation to my afflictions. Pain, on the one part, and dejection, which is its conſequence, on the other, no longer permit me to intereſt myſelf in any thing, except the happineſs and preſervation of your majeſty, and the good news which the baron von Goltz brings me of your health.

May

May I at length, though this I can litle expect, make peace with my malady, as we have lately made with the Engliſh; who, if I do not miſtake, were in as great need of it as ourſelves. Yes, peace at length is arrived; and here will ſtay, till ſome political phrenſy, let it come from what coaſt it will, ſhall bring back diſcord.

The Spaniards ought to think themſelves very lucky, in the recovery of port Mahon and the two Floridas, after the ridiculous, and ſtupid, manner in which they have behaved. Their ignorance of every kind, however, does not prevent them from preſcribing law even to our very theatre, on which the Spaniſh ambaſſador at preſent prevents the acting of a tragedy, the ſubject of which is the death of Don Carlos. You would ſcarcely have imagined, ſire, that it ſhould one day have been forbidden to exhibit, on the French theatre, the moſt cruel and the moſt abominable of the enemies of France, the execrable Philip II. But this perſecution, which literature endures, is the conſequence of the horrible inquiſition to which it has been ſubjected. Happily, or unhappily, for me, my malady, which at preſent intereſts me moſt, will not ſuffer me to feel indignation, or even affliction, at perceiving vexations which do not reach me; though I have many a rhapſody, to beſtow on the world,

locked up in my bureau, when it ſhall pleaſe God to relieve me from pain.

We are continually menaced with troubles toward Turkey; but may they never extend to us! May they alſo, which unfortunately is more difficult of belief, never ſufficiently intereſt you to diſturb that peace which you enjoy with ſo much glory!

We impatiently wait for the new edition of the works of Voltaire; which, it is affirmed, will appear in the courſe of the preſent year, ſhould it pleaſe the argus Fanaticiſm to ſuffer theſe works to enter France. Our fools, as your majeſty has well obſerved, will beſtow that money on the Germans, and the Dutch, which *we* ſo merrily throw away. But this is no affair of mine; let France look to herſelf. Well may your majeſty ſay that the blockheadly cunning of prieſts, while they cry aloud, and pretend to believe that kings are the images of the Deity, wiſhes to perſuade idiot monarchs that the church is the ſafeguard of their throne, and crown. Alas! They bawl in the ears of kings that royalty is derived from God, only that they may with the more art and facility lay the yoke on the necks of kings themſelves. Their ſilly ſyllogiſm, or ſophiſm, would ſoon be formed. "You," ſay they to kings, "derive your

"power

"power from God; therefore, God may de-
"prive you of power, whenever he ſhall pleaſe.
"Now it is we, the miniſters of the living God,
"who announce his will to man; therefore, on
"us your power depends." Such was the logic of Gregory VII. and Innocent IX. and ſuch will ever be the arguments of the ſacerdotal cohort, when attended to by kings, and the mad multitude. I was as much afflicted as I was enraged at the incredible phrenſy and folly of the author of the Syſtem of Nature; who, far from depicting prieſts as they are, the true, the ſole, and the only formidable enemies of princes, has repreſented them, on the contrary, as the ſupport and allies of royalty. Never, perhaps, did philoſophy utter a greater abſurdity, or a more notorious falſehood; though ſhe has, on many another occaſion, been falſe and abſurd. Had I dared, I would have written, with all the powers I poſſeſs, to refute an aſſertion ſo ſtupid, and ſo prejudicial to kings and philoſophers; but the prieſts would have found means to ſuppreſs my thoughts; ſo great is their influence in France, in deſpite of all the ill they effect, and all the impertinence they utter.

I am at preſent reading a tranſlation of Euripides, the author of which is a member of the academy of Berlin. The work appears to me eſtimable,

eſtimable, and I have been informed your majeſty thinks the ſame. I am happy to find myſelf of your opinion.

I am, with the moſt tender veneration, &c.

LETTER CCXXXV.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE, Paris, April 28, 1783.

I AM almoſt aſhamed of inceſſantly wearying your majeſty with my unfortunate condition; and I long would have been ſilent on ſo diſagreeable a ſubject, did not the intereſt which your are ſo kindly pleaſed to take in it make it my duty to ſend you information. I wiſh at leaſt to abridge the narrative, by confining myſelf to ſay, that I continue much in the ſame ſtate; that I have periodical and acute pains, to which relaxation ſucceeds, though ſtill attended with ſuffering; that I ſleep very little at any time; and that weakneſs and dejection are almoſt continual.

The letters with which your majeſty ſo kindly honours me are the only conſolation I can find; and I receive, with the moſt tender gratitude, the new alleviation which you have been pleaſed

to

to adminiſter to my afflictions, by commiſſioning the chevalier de Gauſin, ſecretary to the French embaſſy, to come and make inquiries, on his arrival at Paris, and to inform your majeſty of the ſubſtance of them. Of this duty he acquitted himſelf, with zeal and ardour; an act as flattering as it was pleaſing to me. He had the goodneſs even to come ſeveral times; and I, on my part, enjoyed the pleaſure, ſo dear to my heart, of ſpeaking much more of your majeſty than of myſelf. I perceived, with the moſt innate and tender ſatisfaction, all the ſentiments of reſpect, admiration, and gratitude, with which the chevalier de Gauſin is penetrated for your majeſty.

I heard, with leſs aſtoniſhment than pleaſure, of all the good you had done for your people; and I have likewiſe ſeen an intereſting relation of this good, in a memorial which has lately been read by M. von Hertzberg, before the academy of Berlin. I read this relation to a ſociety of friends, who aſſemble to converſe with a man in affliction; and I ſent them away penetrated with veneration for a prince ſo dear to his ſubjects, and ſo worthy to become, in all things, a model to other monarchs.

The mild and conſolatory philoſophy, with which

which your majeſty ſo kindly fills the letters you are pleaſed to write to me, is another of my comforts. Still philoſophy has few arms, or reſources, againſt phyſical evil; except patience, which is no cure.

Peace, at length, is made God. grant it a long continuance! War is not only a great evil, but neither we nor our enemies know how to make war. We ſtill are threatened that it will ſoon again break out in the north, and in Turkey. Europe is in no need of this new ſcourge; and I ſincerely wiſh it may not reach your majeſty, to whom nothing now is neceſſary but reſt, and the undiſturbed enjoyment of your renown.

The new edition of the works of Voltaire is aſſiduouſly continued at Kehl. It will be a ſplendid one, and will be more rich, by ſeveral volumes, than the former editions. It is ſaid, it will make its appearance in a year at the lateſt, and perhaps ſooner.

A hiſtory of the Baſtille has been publiſhed by Linguet, who lies with great impudence, and who conſequently may perhaps not have ſpoken the truth, at preſent, although he has ſo fine an opportunity of ſpeaking nothing but the truth. I have read the work on *les Lettres de Cachet*, which would

would have been better had the author, who is not Linguet, been leſs prodigal of common place remark, and declamation.

The Cæſar Joſeph appears to me to continue his rigorous treatment of the ſacerdotal legion. His example will certainly not be followed in France, where prieſts, though hated and deſpiſed by government, ſtill preſerve great influence; becauſe miniſters have the ſimplicity to fear them; as if they could poſſeſs any other power except that which government ſhall grant. Your majeſty rightly obſerves error and folly are made for man; and we muſt reſolve to ſuffer him to crouch beneath them, ſince he treats thoſe ſo ill who endeavour to relieve him from the yoke.

I believe I have already done myſelf the honour to inform your majeſty that I have read the tranſlation of Euripides, by M. Prevôt, with as much pleaſure as you have; and, that the tranſlator is a man of much merit and knowledge of various kinds. I am unacquainted with the tranſlation of the hiſtory of Auguſtus, by M. Moulines, and have written to Berlin to procure a copy; for this is a very intereſting hiſtory.

As it is, at preſent, as far decided as phyſicians can decide that my diſeaſe is not the ſtone, I neither can nor ought to uſe remedies which

are

are ſaid to be proper for that malady. Mine is difficult to define, and ſtill more difficult to cure. Remedies that counteract each other are neceſſary, for I am ſubject both to relaxation and ſpaſms. The doctors are bewildered, and I am deprived of hope.

I am, in deſpite of my woes, with the moſt tender veneration, &c.

LETTER CCXXXVI.

From the King.

May 18, 1783.

M. DE SERAN gave me your letter at a time when I was too much occupied to converſe with you at my eaſe. I heard, with pain, his relation of the ſtate of your health. He tells me you have a hæmorrhage in a paſſage through which blood ought not to flow. This confirms the opinion I had conceived of your diſeaſe, and which I communicated to you in my laſt letter. The hæmorrhoids are a malady very common in this country; and this accident, by which it is ſaid you are afflicted, has befallen many perſons here, of which however they have been cured. If it can give you any ſatisfaction, I will

will ſend you preſcriptions; not written by myſelf, but by the beſt of our phyſicians.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CCXXXVII.

From the King.

July 22, 1783.

IT is exceedingly vexatious to find ourſelves ſubjected to the ferula of the phyſician, and to ſurrender ourſelves the ſlaves of his fantaſtic ideas. To avoid the yoke, it is neceſſary we ſhould learn his art. The man who can controul the phyſician does not become the ſport of his ignorance. You know that I have ever been the very humble admirer of the French; but, however prepoſſeſſed I may be in favour of your nation, I venture to ſuſpect that your abortive ſon of Hippocrates thoughtleſsly, or ignorantly, determines on the uſe of the remedies which he preſcribes. He is miſtaken in his judgment; he has confounded diſeaſes, the ſymptoms of which are entirely different. The gravel is as oppoſite to the hæmorrhoids as the oſtrich to the pigeon. I cannot but admire the indulgence with which you continue to confide your health

and

and life to the directions of a quack. Heaven grant you may not become his victim!

In our northern climates, the hæmorrhoids are very common; and our phyſicians have profoundly ſtudied the diſeaſe. Had you fallen into the hands of a more able doctor, you would have been cured in leſs than three months. Not that the malady can be totally removed; but the courſe of the blood, of which Nature wiſhes to rid herſelf, would have been directed through the cuſtomary channel, where the hæmorrhoidal veins end.

Our phyſicians, who begin to be circumſpect ſince they have on various occaſions been ridiculed, will not write any preſcriptions, till they firſt ſhall have received an exact detail of your ſufferings, and their ſymptoms. Were they to act otherwiſe they would riſk the loſs of reputation; for which reaſon they want the *ſtatus morbi* of the patient, to opine what are the drugs with which they ſhall poiſon him.

This is a ſubject of much nearer concern to you than the riſing troubles of the eaſt, the iſſue of which God only knows. Since the abdication of Charles V. we have ſeen him imitated by queen Chriſtina; Victor Amadæus has followed the illuſtrious example; and with him Shah Gueray wiſhes to partake the ſame glory.

You

You will conſequently allow there are monarchs who are undeceived, reſpecting this earth's grandeurs; and who, though they do not know it, are philoſophers. Should the whim of imitating Dionyſius of Syracuſe ever enter my brain, I feel I am too ignorant to become, like him, a ſchoolmaſter, and will ſatisfy myſelf with turning prompter to ſome company of players. But this ſhall be as it ſhall pleaſe Heaven. My prayers, for your preſervation, ſtill ſhall be the ſame.

On which, &c.

LETTER CCXXXVIII.

From the King.

September 30, 1783.

THE baron d'Echerny, whom I know not, and who has been burgomaſter of Neufchatel, at forty crowns per annum, with the title of miniſter of ſtate for the principality, has delivered your letter to me. I am very ſorry to find he left you ſick and ſuffering. Nature perhaps, at the cloſe of life, wiſhes to inſpire us with diſguſt for our exiſtence, that we may leave the world with the leſs regret. Still however I am affected by your afflictions, and could wiſh you

would take the remedies of our German doctors, who are accuſtomed to treat the diſeaſes under which you ſuffer; and by which almoſt every man here is attacked.

If by *gaps of philoſophy* be underſtood all the ſubjects which the human mind has been unable to fathom, and with which the ſpirit of ſyſtem has exerciſed itſelf, the collection of them would form a work twice as voluminous as the Encyclopedie. Man ſeems to me rather made to act than to underſtand. The principles of things conceal themſelves from the moſt perſevering inquiry. Half our life is paſſed away in freeing ourſelves from the errors of our anceſtors; yet at the ſame time we leave Truth in her well, from which, in deſpite of every effort, ſhe never will be drawn by poſterity. Let us therefore ſagely enjoy the few advantages that are allotted us, and let us frequently recollect that doubt is the attendant of knowledge.

But I did not perceive my letter was addreſſed to one of the greateſt philoſophers of our age, who has ſcrutiniſed all the ſecrets of nature; and that one ſo ignorant as myſelf ought to aſſume a more modeſt tone, in his preſence. You perceive, my dear D'Alembert, how much the character of king renders thoſe who bear it impertinent and aſſuming. Philip of Macedon would

would have been more prudent, and would not have dictated to Socrates, had he been his contemporary, but would have gained information in the company of the philoſopher. I wiſh to do the ſame; I will be ſilent and liſten, will read what you have written, and ſhrink behind that modeſty which beſt becomes my ignorance. At preſent I muſt ſatisfy myſelf with a thouſand good wiſhes for your preſervation.

On which, &c.

End of the Correſpondence between FREDERIC II. *and* M. D'ALEMBERT.

LETTERS

BETWEEN

FREDERIC II.

AND

M. DE CONDORCET.

LETTERS

BETWEEN

FREDERIC II.

AND

M. DE CONDORCET.

LETTER I.

From M. de Condorcet.

SIRE, Paris, December 22, 1783.

THE friend of M. D'Alembert dares flatter himſelf that your majeſty will deign not to diſapprove the liberty he takes, to inform you that he participates your grief. Honoured by the intimate confidence of that illuſtrious man, I knew how great was the eſteem, and, I will venture to ſay, the friendſhip of your majeſty for him. The expreſſion ſeems to be authoriſed, in ſome degree, by the equality with which your majeſty has ever treated men of ſuperior

genius; for you, no doubt, was unable to conceal from yourſelf that they alone were truly worthy of being eſteemed your equals.

M. D'Alembert, who appears to have dreaded the pains and infirmities of age, met the approach of death with all the tranquillity, but not the parade, of fortitude. He amuſed himſelf, during the laſt days of his life, with hearing the enigmas of the Mercury* read, and divining their meaning. Two days before his death, he corrected a proof ſheet of the new edition of his tranſlation of Tacitus. He occupied himſelf with equal calmneſs and kindneſs on the means of aſcertaining proper rewards to his ſervants, and ſuccour to thoſe to whom his benevolence afforded ſubſiſtence. With this view he choſe me his heir, and gave me this laſt mark of his friendſhip and confidence.

He wiſhed not to pay any tribute, not even in appearance, to the prejudices of his country, nor dying to render homage to what during life he had uniformly profeſſed to deſpiſe.

Perhaps I ſhall afflict your majeſty, or rather excite your indignation, by informing you of what happened after the death of a man who was an honour to his country. His curate, in-

* *Le Mercure*; a French weekly publication ſo called. T.

deed,

deed, durſt not refuſe him burial. He knew I ſhould have had the courage to appeal from ſuch an act of fanaticiſm to the authority of the laws, and that the appeal would have been heard. The prieſt, therefore, confined himſelf to the refuſal of burial in the church, a diſtinction abſurd in itſelf, but ſtill practiſed among us, and not refuſed to thoſe who can pay, and on which the friends of M. D'Alembert ſet ſome value, becauſe it would have given them the right to erect a monument to his memory. To this the curate added a denial of all the little honours which he could not grant, without committing himſelf with the clergy; and M. D'Alembert was borne without ceremony, amid a people who were aſtoniſhed that their prieſts ſhould treat a man with ſo much indecency, whoſe benevolence theſe ſame prieſts had never ſolicited in vain, when the wants of the poor were exceſſive.

M. D'Alembert has left one volume of mathematics, and ſeveral of philoſophy and literature, ready for the preſs. I propoſe to publiſh a complete edition of his philoſophic and literary works, and venture to aſk your majeſty permiſſion to let it appear under your auſpices. I ſolicit this favour in the name of M. D'Alembert, for my own

own is too obſcure, and too little known to your majeſty.

Two days before his death, M. D'Alembert delivered his correſpondence with your majeſty, and all his papers, into my hands. When he performed this taſk, which was long, and very afflicting to friendſhip, he preſerved a calm fortitude and preſence of mind, by which it was impoſſible not to be affected, while his courage was admired. The letters of your majeſty only, at this cruel moment, ſeemed to incite his regret, and to awaken his ſenſibility. It had long been his intention that they ſhould be confided, after his death, to his old friend, M. Watelet, of the French Academy. The packet, ſealed in the preſence of M. D'Alembert, was thus remitted to that gentleman.

He has left other precious marks of your majeſty's favour, and has diſpoſed of only one of the portraits he received from you, which he bequeathed to madame Deſtouches, his father's widow, a reſpectable woman, who, from the childhood of M. D'Alembert, never ceaſed to afford him marks of friendſhip and eſteem.

The other portraits I regard as a truſt, which I ſhall exerciſe according to the directions your majeſty ſhall deign to give.

The cauſe of reaſon has, in Europe, within

a few years, ſuffered reiterated loſſes, which will with difficulty be repaired. It ſtill has one honourable ſupport, and all who intereſt themſelves in its progreſs moſt ardently wiſh your majeſty's preſervation.

I am, &c.

LETTER II.

From the King.

Potſdam, April 6, 1785.

M. D'ALEMBERT formerly did me the pleaſure to procure me ſome good members for the Academy of Sciences. I have lately loſt two, and you will do me a real ſervice if you can find me ſubſtitutes. The firſt was M. Thiebault, a grammarian and puriſt, whom I imagine the abbé Beauzée would be moſt proper to replace, ſhould he think proper to accept his ſeat. The whole penſion amounts to twelve hundred rix-dollars, and apartments.

The other who has left us is M. Prevot, whoſe department was that of philoſophy and the belles lettres. No one is more capable of diſcovering ſucceſſors to theſe members than yourſelf; and this, if poſſible, would add to the eſteem

eſteem with which, by your character, and your works, I have been inſpired for your perſon.

On which I pray God to take you into his holy keeping.

LETTER III.

From M. de Condorcet.

SIRE, Paris, May 2, 1785.

THE work which I have the honour to preſent to your majeſty treats on very important ſubjects. I thought it might be uſeful to apply the calculation of probabilities to deciſions given by a plurality of votes; and, as I have ever been almoſt equally a lover of mathematics and philoſophy, I think myſelf fortunate to be able to gratify both theſe paſſions at once.

I dare not requeſt your majeſty would deign to glance over a diſcourſe, in itſelf perhaps much too long, that explains the principles and conſequences deduced from the work, free from all appearance of calculation. I ſhall only take the liberty to mention two of theſe conſequences.

The one leads to regard the puniſhment of death as abſolutely unjuſt, except in caſes when the life of the culprit might be dangerous to ſociety.

ciety. This calculation is drawn from a principle which I believe to be rigidly true, and which is, that all poſſibility of error in judgment is real injuſtice, when it does not reſult from the very nature of things, and when it originates in the will of the legiſlator. Now, as it cannot be abſolutely certain that the perſon condemned is not innocent, and as it is exceedingly probable that, in a long liſt of ſentences, an innocent perſon ſhall be condemned, the evident deduction appears to be that we cannot, without injuſtice, voluntarily render error irreparable, to which we are neceſſarily and involuntarily expoſed.

The ſecond conſequence is the impoſſibility of fulfilling, by means of thoſe forms to which deciſions can be ſubjected, the requiſite conditions; unleſs ſuch deciſions are made by very enlightened men; the reſult of which calculation is that the happineſs of nations depends more on the information of the man by whom they are governed than on the form of political conſtitutions; and that the more complicated ſuch forms are the more they approach democracy, and the leſs adapted are they to nations in which the majority of the inhabitants want ſufficient information, or time, to occupy themſelves on public affairs; that, in fine, the deſtruction of abuſes, with promptitude and tranquillity,

quillity, may more reaſonably be hoped in a monarchical, than in a republican, government.

The conſequences may be important, were it only that they oppoſe that kind of exaggeration which has been attempted to be introduced in philoſophy. But I have imagined it was neceſſary to limit myſelf to the mere act of pointing them out, in a work printed at the royal preſs.

I aſk pardon of your majeſty for ſpeaking ſo much of my own ideas, and entreat you will regard the liberty I take, of preſenting my work, as nothing more than a teſtimony of my admiration, and reſpect.

I ſhall uſe every endeavour to correſpond to the confidence with which I am honoured by your majeſty. I have hitherto only one perſon to propoſe as the ſucceſſor of M. Thiebault in the academy, and a teacher of grammar. This perſon is M. Dupuis, who has long been a profeſſor in the univerſity of Paris. His conduct and love of labour have acquired him the general eſteem; but his prevailing paſſion to be erudite has led him to undertake a large work on ancient theogony, and the origin of the conſtellations, which he cannot continue, nor publiſh, without offending people who here are in ſome credit. Not that he means any direct attack on eſtabliſhed doctrines; but the

conſequences

conſequences which will reſult from his diſcuſſions cannot always be reconciled to the prevailing opinions. Nor has he been able, by veiling theſe conſequences, though at the peril of enfeebling the worth of his labours, to avoid diſpleaſing ſome of the members of our academy of belles lettres, who have wiſhed him to declare what he thought on the antiquity of the earth.

Thus cruelly circumſtanced, as a prudent man, but honeſt and firm, he will gratefully accept a place in your academy, and a chair in your military ſchool. One only impediment ſtands in his road. Eighteen months hence he he will become what is called *emeritus* *, and will have a penſion on which to retreat of fourteen hundred livres (or fifty-eight pounds ſterling) per annum. Whereas, ſhould he quit his profeſſorſhip now, he will loſe the labour of eighteen years, by which this penſion has been dearly earned. This impediment your majeſty can remove. Profeſſors, who travel by command of the king, may procure ſubſtitutes, and preſerve their rank of ſeniority; and, ſhould your majeſty take any intereſt in the ſubject, this order you might eaſily obtain.

Thus would you acquire an excellent pro-

* *Emérite*—A profeſſor who has ſerved twenty, or a ſtated number of, years. T.

feſſor

feſſor of grammar, and an academician remarkable for his learning, who has introduced the ſpirit of philoſophy in works of erudition, a ſpirit ſeldom found in this claſs of writers. I might propoſe other men of merit to your majeſty, but none of equal abilities. A long habit of teaching, and conduct free from reproach, in a body among whom his opinions and merit have incited jealouſy and enmity, ſeem to be advantages which few men of letters poſſeſs in ſo great a degree.

M. Beauzée, of whom your majeſty was pleaſed to ſpeak, is aged, inclined to be devout, exceedingly well pleaſed with his ſeat in the French Academy, and, though not rich, is detained here by expectations for himſelf and his children.

I hope ſoon to anſwer your majeſty's wiſhes, relative to a profeſſor of philoſophy, and belles lettres; but you are too well acquainted with the ſtate of our literature and philoſophy not to excuſe a degree of tardineſs, in the execution of this part of your commands.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER IV.

From the King.

Potſdam, May 11, 1785.

I AM greatly obliged to you for the eulogiums you have had the goodneſs to ſend me; and, to ſpeak with all poſſible ſincerity, I own, I think them much ſuperior to thoſe of M. D'Alembert, who adopted a too ſimple and familiar ſtyle, which but ill agrees with this kind of compoſition, in which elevation is required, diveſted of bombaſt. The manner of M. de Fontenelle was perhaps too ſatirical, ſince ſome of his eulogiums appear rather to be criticiſms than panegyrics. It is my wiſh that France may ſupply ſubjects whoſe talents and genius may merit eulogiums worthy of ſtanding beſide thoſe of their predeceſſors.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER V.

From the King.

Potſdam, June 29, 1785.

I HAVE received your letter, but am waiting for your work, which is not yet arrived.

I thank you for the communication, and, according to your direction, ſhall confine myſelf to the preface; for the ignorant, like myſelf, are ſatisfied with the reſult of calculation, without ſounding the bottomleſs deep.

With reſpect to your opinion on the puniſhment of death, I am glad it is the ſame with that of the marquis Beccaria. In moſt countries, culprits are only puniſhed with death for atrocious crimes. A ſon who kills his father, a poiſoner, and other flagrant offenders, require exemplary puniſhment; that fear may detain the depraved, who might otherwiſe be capable of ſimilar guilt.

It is now fifty years ſince the torture has been baniſhed Pruſſia, after the example of England*. The reaſon of this is moſt evident; the ſtrength or conſtitution of the tortured will dictate the reply. Means which may produce an avowal of truth, or of falſehood, extorted by pain, are equivocal, and too dangerous to be employed. But I know that philoſophy dare not, unfortunately, walk erect in all countries.

I am exceedingly obliged to you for the per-

* Here, as in the Memoirs of the Houſe of Brandenburg, the king ſeems to ſuppoſe the torture was once practiſed in England, which was never the caſe, at leaſt under the ſanction of the laws. T.

ſon

ſon you propoſe as the ſucceſſor of M. Thiebault; and, if he be willing, cheerfully accept the offer. Should we not be able to obtain the penſion which he hopes to enjoy in France, one may be granted him on his retreat, when he ſhall no longer be capable of labour. I will, beſide, write to the baron von Goltz, that he may endeavour to obtain his penſion from France; and, ſhould he be refuſed, I will arrange every thing myſelf.

His Theogony he may publiſh here, according to his good pleaſure. Generally ſpeaking, I am of his opinion, and think that the planets and the globe we inhabit are infinitely more ancient than they are ſaid to be. Of all ſyſtems, on this ſubject, that of the eternity of the world is the one in which leaſt contradictions occur, and in which there is the greateſt appearance of truth.

I eaſily conceive that time is neceſſary to ſelect a profeſſor of philoſophy and belles lettres; I therefore ſhall not preſs you on the ſubject, except by entreating you occaſionally to recollect that a number of young perſons, aſſembled in an academy, are eagerly waiting the inſtructions they want during the abſence of a profeſſor.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER VI.

From M. de Condorcet.

SIRE, Undated.

A CAPTAIN of artillery, whoſe name is M. de Saint-Remi, has propoſed a prize of ſix hundred livres (five-and-twenty pounds ſterling) for the beſt eulogium on M. D'Alembert, ſubmitted to the deciſion of the French academy. Some of his friends have joined M. de Saint-Remi, to have a medal ſtruck. But one medal has yet been taken off, which I have thought it my duty to preſent to your majeſty.

The French academy has received no eulogium, and the prize is conſequently remitted to another year. This afflicts me. Not that the fame of M. D'Alembert ſuffers, but that of our literature. Moſt of thoſe who generally write for the prize have more than one kind of obligation to M. D'Alembert; and, by their ſilence, they are liable to the reproach of ingratitude, at leaſt, unleſs we may regard it as an avowal of their ignorance; but ignorance is the ſecret malady of our literature, and philoſophy. Wanting ideas, fine phraſes are ſtudied, and an extraordinary ſtyle, in which to expreſs com-

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mon-place remarks, while paradoxes are retailed, becauſe none but trivial truths are diſcovered.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER VII.

From the King.

Potſdam, Auguſt 9, 1785.

I HAVE received the medal of M. D'Alembert, which you have had the goodneſs to ſend me. I wiſh he had been ſuffered to wear his wig, as he uſually did, becauſe nothing more contributes to a juſt likeneſs than the repreſentation of the man in his moſt cuſtomary dreſs.

It is ſingular that M. de Saint-Remi ſhould appropriate a prize for the medals of philoſophers, and that numerous men of letters who had obligations to M. D'Alembert ſhould none of them think proper to write his eulogium. Nothing in this world is more ſcarce than gratitude; but the memory of M. D'Alembert will ſuffer no great loſs. No praiſe is better than ill praiſe. The ſunſhine of literature is gone by; her thrones are vacant, and there are but few

candidates worthy of aſcending them. You, who are the ſcholar of the great man whom we regret, alone can be his ſucceſſor.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER VIII.

From M. de Condorcet.

SIRE, Paris, September 19, 1785.

I RECEIVED the letter your majeſty was pleaſed to write but a few days ſince, on my return from a journey which I had made into Brittany and Berry, to examine ſome plans of navigation.

I hope M. Dupuis will obtain that favour from our government in behalf of which your majeſty has deigned to teſtify ſome intereſt. The univerſity, as a body, far from oppoſing, appear to be flattered by the honour conferred on M. Dupuis, which reflects honour on the univerſity itſelf. The artifices of ſome inferior perſons, envious of M. Dupuis, and who are certain never to be invited to leave their college, have raiſed trifling obſtacles, which the count de Vergennes may eaſily remove.

 I have

I have met with a man of merit for the place of profeſſor of belles lettres and philoſophy. But, before I do myſelf the honour to propoſe him to your majeſty, I muſt inquire further.

In France, unfortunately, we are yet far from puniſhing none but atrocious crimes with death. Our laws ſubject various ſpecies of theft to this puniſhment, and theft not claſſed according to any fixed principles, but to individual motives, and ſuch as temporary circumſtances ſeem to exact. Our juriſprudence is inferior to that of moſt of the nations of Europe; yet, at the beginning of this century, England was the only country that ſeemed to have ſome advantage over us. One of the firſt of your majeſty's cares was to improve that branch of legiſlation in the monarchy you govern, and ſeveral princes have followed your example.

There is one ſingle conſideration which would prevent me from ſuppoſing the puniſhment of death of utility, even when confined to none but atrocious crimes; which is that theſe are the very crimes for the commiſſion of which judges are moſt expoſed to condemn the innocent. The horror which ſuch acts inſpire, and the kind of popular fury incited againſt thoſe who are ſuppoſed guilty, often excite perturbation in the minds of judges and juries. Of this

there are too frequent examples in England, as well as in France.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER IX.

From the King.

Potſdam, October 14, 1785.

I AM exceedingly obliged to you for the trouble you take to procure thoſe members for our academy of whom it is in great need. I imagine delay is neceſſary, as well in the choice of perſons as in the prevailing on them to accept the places propoſed. But I have no doubt you will ſucceed in procuring me able men, and I ſhall be under great obligations to you.

I come to the article of laws, ſo well explained by Beccaria, and on which you have likewiſe written. I am entirely of your opinion that judges ought not to be haſty in pronouncing ſentence, and that to ſave the guilty is better than to murder the innocent; yet I think I am taught, by experience, that none of the curbs which lay reſtraint on men ought to be neglected. Reward and puniſhment are the principal engines in legiſlation; and there are caſes

in

in which the atrocity of the crime demands rigour in the chaſtiſement. Aſſaſſins and incendiaries, for example, deſerve death; for they have aſſumed a tyrannical power over the lives and poſſeſſions of men. I allow that perpetual impriſonment is, in reality, a more cruel puniſhment than death; but not ſo ſtriking as that which is performed in the preſence of the multitude; for ſuch exhibitions make a ſtronger impreſſion than the accidental diſcourſe which recals to mind the pains endured by thoſe who languiſh in priſon.

I have done every thing in my power to reform the laws, and obviate the abuſes of courts of juſtice. Would angels undertake the buſineſs they might be ſucceſsful; but, having no intercourſe with theſe gentry, we are obliged to confide in the miniſtry of men, who always ſtop much ſhort of perfection.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER X.

From M. de Condorcet.

SIRE, Paris, November 11, 1785.

THE bounty with which your majeſty has deigned to accept ſome of my academic eulogiums

eulogiums emboldens me to offer thoſe of the learned who died in the courſe of the year 1782, a year fatal to the academy, and which ſwept off a tenth of its members.

Among theſe eulogiums you will meet with that of Vaucanſon, whom you invited to Berlin at the beginning of your reign, to which mark of your eſteem he was indebted for the fortune which afterward attended him in his own country. It was you likewiſe who had the bounty to inform us, ſome time after, that M. D'Alembert was a man of genius. We ſhall often ſtand in need of more than one ſpecies of inſtruction from your majeſty.

You have diſcovered rather too much familiarity of ſtyle in the latter eulogiums written by M. D'Alembert. This is an error to which the greateſt writers are liable, as they grow old. Voltaire himſelf was not exempt from it, eſpecially in poetry; and concealed it in proſe only by his graces and the ſtrength of his mind. It is a defect to which we are naturally inclined; nor can it be avoided but by continually watching ourſelves, which vigilance is too fatiguing when our organs begin to loſe their powers and pliability.

I hope ſoon to have the honour of ſubmitting to your majeſty's judgment the remainder of

of the collection of the eulogiums of my illuſtrious friend, and dare flatter myſelf you will there find many noble and poignant paſſages, the artful and profound philoſophy of which will induce you to pardon the inelegancies you may occaſionally remark.

The public papers have incited falſe alarms. From your majeſty alone all Europe expects a continuation of the tranquillity it at preſent enjoys. This was a glory reſerved for you, and which no warlike hero before merited.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER XI.

From the King.

Potſdam, December 12, 1785.

I AM infinitely obliged to you for your laſt academical eulogiums. I am of your opinion that age enfeebles the ſtyle of proſe writers, as it does the impetuoſity of the poet; and that we ſhould ſay, with Boileau, to all old men of letters——

Malheureux, laiſſe en paix ton cheval vieilliſſant,
De peur que tout à coup, efflanqué, ſans haleine,
Il ne jette, en tombant, ſon maitre ſur l'arène *.

* Torment not, wretch, thy aged Pegaſus; leſt, panting, and out of breath, he ſtumble, and leave his maſter in the duſt.

I have

I have continued to ſuppoſe you would give yourſelf the trouble to procure me one M. Leveſque, of whom I have heard much to his advantage, to act as philoſophy profeſſor, a place very neceſſary to my academy. I am obliged to you for the concern you take in my health; but at my age it is neceſſary to keep one foot in the ſtirrup, and be ready to depart when the quarter of an hour of Rabelais ſhall ſtrike.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER XII.

From M. de Condorcet.

SIRE, Undated.

M. LEVESQUE gratefully accepts the place to which your majeſty has been pleaſed to appoint him, and which I flatter myſelf he will fill with propriety. He is the diſciple of Locke, and of the ancients; and to the preciſion of modern analyſis adds the vigour of thoſe principles which ſo much pleaſe us, in the moral philoſophy of the Greeks and Romans. I ſhall never conſole myſelf ſhould my cares ill anſwer the confidence with which your majeſty has, for the firſt time, been pleaſed to honour me.

We

We have juſt loſt M. Watelet, a member of the French academy, and of that of your majeſty. The letters you wrote to M. D'Alembert were entruſted to him, and have been left undiſpoſed of. They will in all probability be remitted to the duke de Nivernois. My reſpect for your majeſty, and the intereſt I take in the memory of M. D'Alembert, made me think it my duty to ſend you this information, and to watch as attentively as I can over a truſt ſo precious to literature, philoſophy, and humanity, till your majeſty ſhall deign to make your intentions known.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER XIII.

From the King.

Potſdam, February 6, 1786.

I AM greatly obliged to you for your cares that my correſpondence with the late M. D'Alembert ſhould not be made public. My letters only deſerve to be ſacrificed to Vulcan; for they are neither amuſing nor intereſting to the world. The age is already overloaded with bad works, without adding mine,

while the good are ſcarce. You have rendered me a real ſervice by procuring me a grammarian, and another profeſſor for the military academy. Their ſcholars wait their arrival with impatience; for till then their education muſt be neglected.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER XIV.

From M. de Condorcet.

SIRE, Paris, March 26, 1786.

I HAVE inceſſantly uſed every effort that no indiſcretion might be committed, relative to the correſpondence of your majeſty with M. D'Alembert. M. Watelet was receiver general of the finances; the chamber of accounts ſealed up his papers, and the utmoſt that the rigour of form would permit was that the correſpondence ſhould be delivered up, in charge, to M. Nicolaï, firſt preſident of that chamber, who will keep them till ſome one ſhall come and reclaim them in your majeſty's name.

Should you be pleaſed to commit this charge to the baron de Grimm, or deign to confide the truſt, ſo ineſtimable to the fame of my friend,

to

to me, it will no longer be expoſed to various kinds of indiſcretion and treachery. I will ſtand anſwerable to your majeſty that it ſhall never leave my poſſeſſion, and will take the moſt certain precautions that it ſhall not be expoſed by any new accident.

M. Leveſque will be ready to depart toward the end of April. A man of letters, the father of a family, and with little wealth, needs more time to arrange his affairs, though far from complicated, than other perſons. The leaſt negligence might be fatal to a ſmall fortune.

M. Dupuis cannot leave Paris till toward the month of September; he will then become free; for it was impoſſible to obtain the favour for him which his talents merited, and which the intereſt your majeſty deigned to denote would certainly have procured, if bodies of men, and eſpecially bodies conſtituted like that of the univerſity of Paris, might be guided like individuals.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LET-

LETTER XV.

From the King.

Undated.

IF any one have a juſt claim to my letters, written to the late M. D'Alembert, you certainly, ſir, are the perſon. But they were not intended for publication; they are trifles as little calculated to inſtruct as to amuſe. I therefore ſhall be much obliged to you if you will act in the manner you think moſt proper to prevent their publication. For this purpoſe you only need gain poſſeſſion of the correſpondence, a truſt which cannot fall into better hands.

I have cauſed the travelling expences of M. Leveſque to be paid at Paris. If he found nothing diſagreeable in his reſidence at Peterſburg, where I hear he ſeveral years remained, he will diſcover ſtill leſs difference between the climate and manners of Pruſſia, and thoſe of his own country.

On which I pray, &c.

LET-

LETTER XVI.

From M. de Condorcet.

SIRE, Paris, May 6, 1786.

I WAS greatly affected by the bounty with which your majeſty deigned to permit me to reclaim the letters of M. D'Alembert, and to keep the precious depoſit in my poſſeſſion. This mark of your confidence will ever be dear to me, and inſpire me with unceaſing and reſpectful gratitude, although I cannot profit by the grant.

Your majeſty will ſee, by the letter of the count de Vergennes, a copy of which I have the honour to incloſe, that he had already diſpoſed of this depoſit, and that he thought it more prudent to divine, than to wait for, your majeſty's commands. M. de Nicolaï, firſt preſident of our chamber of accounts, who poſitively promiſed not to part with the letters, and who received them on that condition, did not think himſelf obliged to fulfil his promiſe.

I may be indulged in my grief at this accident. Your majeſty is the only perſon who could remain inſenſible of the value of your

letters; and, intereſted as I am in the fame of M. D'Alembert, how could I behold the deſtruction of the fineſt monument with which his memory could be honoured, with indifference? Far from diminiſhing the ſentiments which the bounty and confidence of your majeſty have inſpired, they will but be increaſed by my regret.

Deign, ſire, to accept this homage, and ſuffer me eternally to devote ſomething better than reſpect and admiration to your majeſty.

May I venture to join the wiſhes of all Europe? A king and a hero who has excited ſo ardent an intereſt among foreign nations, an intereſt ſo generally and ſo profoundly felt, is unexampled; like the monarch in queſtion, he is unique.

I am, &c.

Letter from M. de Vergennes to M. de Condorcet.

Verſailles, May 3, 1786.

I RECEIVED the letter which you did me the honour to write, ſir, dated the firſt of this month, with the annexed copy of that of the king of Pruſſia; and it is with regret that I perceive the impoſſibility of gratifying your claims. Informed by perſons worthy of credit that

that the king of Pruſſia deſired the part of his correſpondence which was collected at the death of M. Watelet ſhould not be publiſhed, and being further informed that the publication could add nothing to the glory of the monarch, conſidering the nature of the ſubjects there treated on, the moſt efficacious means of aſcertaining at preſent, and to futurity, obedience to the will of his Pruſſian majeſty was for ever to ſuppreſs that correſpondence. This I did, in the preſence of the firſt preſident of the chamber of accounts. I did not neglect, ſir, to inform the king of Pruſſia of the fact, and I flatter myſelf he will applaud the precaution.

I have no doubt, ſir, but the correſpondence would have been exceedingly ſafe in your poſſeſſion; but men are not immortal, and their intentions are not always executed by their ſucceſſors.

I am, &c.

LETTER XVII.

From the King.

Potſdam, May 25, 1786.

I CONSIDER the burning of my letters as an exceedingly favourable incident, and as the

moſt certain means to prevent their appearance. It would have been diſagreeable to me to ſee thoſe letters ſent into the world which were not meant to meet the eye of the public. To the forty, who are the depoſitories of the purity of the French language, it appertains to furniſh you with perfection of every kind, ſuch as may merit the honours conferred by the preſs. I know not what is become of the two profeſſors for my military ſchool. The young people remain too long without inſtruction, although I have agreed to their double penſions, expences of travelling, &c. I therefore cannot comprehend what ſtops them, and I own a longer delay might tend to injure the opinion I had formed of them; but this will not diminiſh the obligations I have to you, and I feel the value of the trouble you have taken in the buſineſs.

On which I pray, &c. &c.

End of the Correſpondence between FREDERIC II. *and M. de* CONDORCET.

LETTERS

OF

FREDERIC II.

TO

M. GRIMM.

LETTERS

OF

FREDERIC II.

TO

M. GRIMM.

LETTER I.

From the King.

1773.

I HAVE had aſthmatic fits that ſometimes have made me ill enough, in which ſtate I find myſelf at preſent. I ſhall therefore ſatisfy myſelf with acknowledging the receipt of your letter, and of thoſe by which it is accompanied, without entering into any further detail. Have the goodneſs to ſend the incloſed according to their addreſs.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER II.

From the King.

Potſdam, February 25, 1774.

YOUR letter, of the fifth of February, arrived the day before yeſterday. I thank you for the intereſt you take in what relates to me, and my relations of the chriſtian calendar. My ſaint does not approve the application of the remark of Jean Jacques, which, ſpoken of the orcheſtra of Paris, may be judicious. Be it as it will, we muſt profit by the fathers.

What you tell me of your converſations with her Imperial majeſty, relative to myſelf, flatters and intereſts me. Nothing can delight me more than to be remembered by that great princeſs, for whom I have infinite veneration. I have diſcourſed with you on her talents, grand views, elevation of ſoul, and that bounty with which ſhe welcomes thoſe who have the happineſs to approach her. You have had time to recollect and verify all I have ſaid. I eaſily conceive how great muſt be your regret, and that you will no where find any objects equal to the things of which you have been a ſpectator. I ſhall ſee you with pleaſure, as you paſs through Berlin, and ſhall converſe more at large on a ſubject concern-

concerning which I have ſo many reaſons to be intereſted.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER III.

From the King.

Potſdam, February 19, 1782.

WHEN I addreſs myſelf to the baron of Grimmgribber*, colonel of the Préobraſchinſky guards of her Imperial majeſty of all the Ruſſias, I think myſelf certainly able to prove the definition of the title, both by public act and patent; but I do not underſtand the title of *ſuffer-pain*†, nor the tranſlation of a Ruſſian word which I cannot comprehend, conſequently, to which I can annex no clear idea. With reſpect to the epithet *breaſt-plate*‡, I by no means think it ſuitable to the worthy baron; unleſs indeed we might ſay that whoever is under the protection of the colonel may conſider that protection as the ægis of Minerva, which will render all its poſſeſſors invulnerable. Permit me therefore to ſubſtitute the ægis inſtead of the

* *A M. de la Grimmaliere.*

† *Souffre-douleur.* ‡ *Plaſtron.*

breaſt-

breaſt-plate, and to regard you as the protector of the duke of Saxe-Gotha in France; you who have protected the young Romanzows, amid all the temptations of youth, and who, in ſome ſort, may be compared to the cardinals who are the protectors of France and Germany, at Rome. In like manner you protect the intereſts of the great Catharine in the empire of the Gauls.

M. Grimmgribber will have the kindneſs to perceive, from what I have ſaid, how far I am from hurling my darts at him, and how much I recommend myſelf to his puiſſant patronage. I ſhould, no doubt, have anſwered him ſooner, had I not been attacked by a dozen diſeaſes at once, which have deprived me of the uſe of all my members. I have been exceedingly chagrined to hear he was ſo near my frontiers, and to be deprived of the beatific viſion. Arioſto has ſaid, though mountains cannot, men may meet; ſo that I do not deſpair but that ſome happy influence of my fortunate ſtar may, one day, procure me the ſatisfaction to ſee and admire this baron once again.

On which I pray, &c.

LET-

LETTER IV.

From the King.

Potſdam, November 11, 1783.

YOU may well imagine how much I was affected by the death of D'Alembert, eſpecially as I ſuppoſed him attacked by a chronic diſeaſe, but not by one which directly threatened his life. I doubt France will not ſoon repair his loſs. It is not wonderful that ſickneſs had lately enfeebled his mind; for death, by attacking all the organized parts of our bodies, muſt, while effecting their deſtruction, deprive them of their activity. I am, however, obliged to you for having communicated this melancholy intelligence, nor could I forbear ſaying to myſelf—"We muſt either die, or live to ſee others die; "there is no medium."

On which I pray, &c.

LET-

LETTER V.

From the King.

Potſdam, December 16, 1783.

I AM indebted to you for your cares to prevent the publication of my correſpondence with D'Alembert, which various reaſons have led me to wiſh. In the firſt place there was nothing worthy of publication; and, again, the reputation of M. D'Alembert is ſo well eſtabliſhed that it has no need either of my ſupport or my ſuffrage.

I cannot but confeſs how melancholy it is to ſee all the perſons whom I have eſteemed die, one after the other; and that affliction is increaſed becauſe it does not depend upon myſelf to die, or to ſee others die. Theſe are all effects of ſecondary cauſes, which, by their different combinations, are productive of very dreadful events. True it is I have erected monuments to Algarotti and D'Argens, whom I greatly loved, and who long lived with me, and I am another cenotaph indebted to the honour of Copernicus, which I propoſe to erect in Pruſſia.

Should French literature produce any thing curious,

curious, you will do me a pleaſure by communicating it, without troubling yourſelf with the ſubaltern claſſes of the literati, for whom I care but little.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER VI.

From the King.

Potſdam, May 11, 1785.

I AM much obliged to you for the letter of M. de Condorcet, which you ſent me, and an anſwer to which I return, requeſting you to deliver it. The fine arts and belles lettres ſeem to undergo the ſame fate in Europe as they formerly did at Rome, after the great Auguſtan age, when mediocrity was the ſucceſſor of genius. After having carried the belles lettres to the height of poſſible perfection, the nation, as if ſatiated with ſuch maſterly writings, began to be diſguſted with them; the language, which had attained a certain degree of purity, was degraded by far-fetched phraſes and terms; the ſevere and acrid ſpirit of philoſophy oppoſed the effervescence of imagination; and genius, confined within too narrow limits, no longer was fruitful in great productions.

I thank you, old as I am, for having kept my birth day; I am but too aged; but each muſt live till that period when the thread of follies which fate has condemned him to commit in this world ſhall be cut. According to the deceaſed prince of Deuxponts, ſalvation is only at Paris; conſequently, thoſe who live elſewhere do but vegetate in purgatory, or in limbo. Should you think proper to contradict this opinion, you may ſeek ſatisfaction of the late prince of Deuxponts; and, if you yourſelf be too feeble to attack that family, you need but join the emperor, with whom you were at Spa. He will willingly aſſiſt you with his whole powers, that you may gain your cauſe.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER VII.

From the King.

Potſdam, Auguſt 9, 1785.

I RETURN you thanks for the medal of M. D'Alembert, which you have conveyed to me; but could have wiſhed the likeneſs had been better preſerved. He might, however, have been greatly changed in a ſpace of twenty years, during which I had not ſeen him. I

have never heard a word of the officer of artillery, whom you mention to me; but it is not ſurpriſing that a nation ſo poliſhed as France ſhould ſend to enlighten barbarians, and communicate parcels of her immenſe magazine of knowledge. The Turks ought to admire their artillery legiſlator, nor can I ſuſpect they will treat him with violence*.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER VIII.

From the King.

Potſdam, October 24, 1785.

I AM much obliged to you for the letter which you have conveyed to me from M. de Condorcet. Incloſed is an anſwer which you will be kind enough to ſend. I ſcarcely could enjoy the apparition of ſome Frenchmen in this country, and, among others, of M. de la Fayette. I have paſſed four weeks in company with the gout, which is more diſagreeable than that of theſe gentlemen. I congratulate M. de la Grimmgribber on the augmentation which the empreſs of Ruſſia is making in her troops; becauſe the natural

* The baron de Tott is no doubt the officer in queſtion. T.

tural conſequence will, no doubt, be an advance of rank; and, perhaps, in the war which is preparing againſt the Porte, it may fall to your lot to take Conſtantinople, at the head of a victorious army. I ſhall be a ſpectator of theſe high deeds of arms, and, ſhould not the weakneſs of age lay too potent ſhackles upon me, I intend to celebrate theſe miracles of our times, and to rank your name with that of Alexander and Cæſar; and that of the Autocratrix of all the Ruſſias with thoſe of Jupiter and Neptune.

On which I pray, &c.

End of the Letters of FREDERIC II. *to M.* GRIMM.

LETTERS

BETWEEN

FREDERIC II.

AND

M. D'ARGET.

LETTERS

BETWEEN

FREDERIC II.

AND

M. D'ARGET.

LETTER I.

From M. D'Arget.

SIRE, Berlin, May 20, 1749.

I HAVE, this moment, received letters from Paris, which I have the honour to lay before your majesty. They contain literary intelligence, and details relative to Voltaire, of which and whom I imagine your majesty will not be sorry to be informed.

M. D'Arnaud writes me word that the journey of M. de Voltaire may probably be delayed till the month of September, the time when madame du Chatelet will be brought to bed. He

likewiſe mentions to me a new work, in one volume, which the connoiſſeurs hold in great eſteem; its title is *Voyage Pittoreſque**, or, The Beauties of Sculpture, Architecture, and Painting, in Paris. Is it your majeſty's pleaſure that I ſhould write to the ſieur D'Arnaud to ſend you the book? Not a moment is loſt in the printing of the poem, but I fear it cannot be finiſhed before the end of the month, though I hoped at firſt it might have been; becauſe, inſtead of twenty-two ſheets, it will contain twenty-eight; the reaſon of which is, ſome pages muſt be printed rather wider, that the end of each book may correſpond with the back of the leaf; otherwiſe the vignettes and tail-pieces would be improperly placed, and the work would be deprived of beauty. I aſſure your majeſty, I exert my whole abilities that the edition may be worthy of the work; but it is an attempt of great difficulty, beyond my talents, and thoſe of the printer. I have received a letter from M. Petit, who is continually following the *Soubrette*†, but he deſpairs of inducing her to accept ſeven hundred German crowns. She is ſaid to be handſome and witty. Perhaps your majeſty may have

* A Picturesque Tour, &c.

† An actreſs is ſo called who plays the part of chamber-maids. T.

the

the goodneſs to grant her eight hundred crowns, ſhould ſhe abſolutely refuſe to come for leſs. I wait your orders on the ſubject, that I may ſend the ſieur Petit a deciſive anſwer.

The bookſeller Neaulme has at length returned me an anſwer, concerning the edition of Ovid. He thinks the Love Elegies, thoſe written in Pontus, the Art of Love, Love's Remedy, the Faſti, and the Triſtia, if collected into one volume, agreeable to your majeſty's commands, will be too thick and of a diſagreeable ſize. He propoſes to divide the ſix into two volumes of an equal bulk; the letter preſs and ſize to be ſimilar to the Horace. His demand is four hundred and thirty German crowns, half in advance; being, as he ſays, incapable otherwiſe of undertaking the work.

I entreat your majeſty to inform me of your intentions, on this ſubject.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER II.

From the King.

Potſdam, May 24, 1749.

YOUR letter was ſafely delivered, and I thank you for the communication of your literary intelligence. I wiſh you would ſend to Paris for the Memoirs of Sir William Temple, the letters of Cardinal D'Oſſat, the Eſſay on Commerce by Mélon, and his Political Romance. Send likewiſe for Cæſar's Commentaries, the beautiful London edition in folio, and the Dictionary of the French Academy in quarto. I wiſh you to execute this commiſſion carefully. When I demand any book, let it be underſtood that the moſt beautiful, correct, and valuable edition is to be choſen. Nothing can be more clear, more ſimple. Men like Thiriot can only ſuppoſe the contrary. I will have no book on the paintings in Paris, for I fear temptation.

I am obliged to you for your attention to my poem. It will owe all its beauty to the editor. With reſpect to the *Soubrette* of Paris, if ſhe will have none of my money, I ſhall laugh at her airs. The truth is, I do not think proper to increaſe

increaſe the ſum ſet apart for the uſe of the comedians. Actors are like the ſea, which receives tribute from a thouſand ſources without ever having enough, or ever being more full.

FREDERIC.

LETTER III.

From M. D'Arget.

Berlin, November, 1749.

I DARE not mention to your majeſty the affliction I feel, for the death of my wife; it is great beyond expreſſion; and ſhould God, time, and your majeſty's bounty, produce no effect on me, it will render my life one continuation of pain, and miſery. I do not yield without a ſtruggle; but, ſhould the remedies I try deceive my wiſhes, I hope your majeſty's humanity will permit me to go, conceal my tears in eternal retirement, and leave ſome one more fortunate, and leſs ſorrowful, than myſelf, the happineſs of ſerving ſo good and worthy a maſter, in the manner he deſerves to be ſerved.

I am, &c.

LETTER IV.

From the King.

Potſdam, November 10, 1749.

DO not abandon yourſelf to grief. Act reaſonably, and you will then remember that we are not immortal, that life is ſhort, and that it is not worth our while to afflict ourſelves, during the ſhort time we have to live. Accidents are our maſters, and for a philoſopher to murmur againſt the laws of Nature, or a chriſtian againſt the will of Providence, is to render both philoſopher and chriſtian criminal. Recollect, heaven has only taken a part of what it gave; and to contemn all which ſtill is left is to do heaven wrong. You have a ſon, whom it is your duty to educate, and properly introduce to the world.

Your affliction is ineffectual; the dead are ignorant of it, and the living, after the firſt fits of ſorrow, require you to preſcribe juſt limits to its courſe. Inſtead of yielding to grief, endeavour to divert your attention. As ſoon as you have executed the buſineſs in hand, come hither. I will require nothing of you, except that you ſhould endeavour to relieve your mind, by recrea-

recreation. The fate of man is to be born and die; and whoever is aſtoniſhed, when ſuch accidents happen, proves that he has never reaſoned on his own condition. Drive the object which overwhelms you from your ſight; look at any other thing in nature. Montagne has very well remarked that there are two handles to all things on earth, one good, one bad; and we are affected according to the manner in which we lay hold. I am ſenſible of the weight of your grief, but I cannot but imagine you have underſtanding enough to gain time, ſo as to find conſolation. Should we not be madmen were we to deſpair becauſe yeſterday muſt never return? Many a day and many a morrow muſt paſs away, none of which ſhall ever more be ſeen. This is the very moment in which you ought to ſhew yourſelf a man, and vanquiſh your feelings. Scripture informs us that he that ruleth his ſpirit is better than he that taketh a city. Adieu, my good D'Arget; may my ſermon make ſome impreſſion on your mind, and reſtore it to that calm ſtate of which it certainly has great need!

FREDERIC.

P. S. I have ſent you two paſſages, which according to my calculation will make five pages of letter preſs; the other five will ſoon follow;

follow; but, after reading my poem again, I have detected ſo many faults, and things neceſſary to be corrected, that I am determined to make a new and more perfect edition, of all the pieces contained in the firſt volume.

LETTER V.

From the King.

Potſdam, 1750.

I RETURN you my epiſtle with all the corrections made. I have left the word *harcela* to ſee what Voltaire will ſay to it. We muſt indulge him in the pleaſure of detecting ſome inaccuracy. Be kind enough at preſent to have it copied, and if poſſible return it me to-morrow. Alas! Poor D'Arget! Woe to the ſecretary of a poet! And accurſed, and damned, of God be he who continually verſifies. * * * * * *. †

† Short paſſages will occaſionally be omitted, as in the above inſtance; but elſewhere, as here, aſteriſms will be inſerted, to denote ſuch omiſſions, and to direct thoſe who may wiſh to examine, from the original, why they have been made. T.

LET-

LETTER VI.

From the King.

April, 1752.

TRULY, my good D'Arget, I imagine I ſhall behold a Mamamouchi * when you return. God knows what ſtrange ideas enter the heads of your countrymen! The order of St. John of Latran is ſo much deſpiſed, in Italy, that it may be bought for forty crowns. Surely it is little worth your while to make yourſelf a Mamamouchi. A much ſhorter way will be to cut off ſix locks of hair, from the crown of your head; the world would laugh leſs at a tonſured pate than at an order which confers no dignity.

By what I can perceive, your French phyſicians perfectly underſtand the art of emptying the purſe. You will return to this place as you left it; and I, in my ignorance, dare aſſure you exerciſe only can effect your cure.

Voltaire has behaved here like a knave, a

* This is the term employed by the king, who often took pleaſure in the uſe of uncommon words. It ſignifies buffoon; though it here alludes to the folly of the title of knight, as coveted by M. D'Arget. The Italians ſay—*Fare alle mammùcce*—To play, like children, with baubles. T.

conſummate

conſummate cheat. I have very plainly told him what he deſerves. He is a wretch, and I bluſh for human genius, when a man who has ſo much can be ſo full of malevolence. I recommend myſelf to thy remembrance, my gentle Sir-knight! Yet, for God's ſake, if thou doſt make thyſelf a Mamamouchi, ſend me previous notice; otherwiſe, when I meet thee, I might die with laughing, which would not be decent.

FREDERIC.

LETTER VII.

From the King.

Potſdam, June, 1752.

I HAVE received your letter, and entreat you not to indulge your mind in melancholy impreſſions. You will be received here in the manner in which you was diſmiſſed; nay I ſhall be even good enough to pity, inſtead of laughing at you, for having ſo unſeaſonably expended your money in France. I will not even make you recollect that I predicted every thing that has happened; nay, ſhould you have

become a Mamamouchi of St. John of Latran, I will not ſo much as laugh, provided I be firſt informed of the circumſtance.

Adieu, my good D'Arget, I am going to the opera.

FREDERIC

LETTER VIII.

From the King.

Potſdam, July 6, 1752.

YOURS is a very gloomy letter, my good D'Arget. Cure yourſelf at once of the chimæras which afflict you. I proteſt no perſon has ſpoken of you, nor has vented any calumnies againſt you. It is only black blood which circulates ſlowly in the lower abdomen, and which occaſions ſuch heavy fumes to aſcend to your brain. Stay therefore in France till September.

You will never believe me. I told you that the air of Paris was no other than the air of a great city; that phyſicians there are as great empirics as they are here; and that there is no remedy for you except exerciſe. But you never take my word till you are brought to repentance.

You

You will return with an empty purſe and a ſplenetic mind; and, to your great conſolation, will be taught that, not the hæmorrhoids, but, an inveterate ſcurvy renders your life wretched. This is what we get by travelling.

Adieu. Flutter about, take a few drugs, and chuſe *Paris* *, rather than Vernage, or Aſtruc, for your phyſician, Harlequin for your apothecary, and Scaramouch for your bather.

FREDERIC.

LETTER IX.

From the King.

Potſdam, July 31, 1752.

YOU ſend me plenty of the dreams of ſpleen, my good D'Arget. No man has ſpoken either good or ill of you to me, and I learn from yourſelf that you have ſold ſome plate. I lived in ſecurity, nor ever once ſuſpected the buſineſs. Baniſh therefore the viſions which embitter your

* *La Paris*—I do not underſtand what is meant by chuſing *la Paris* for a phyſician. La ville de Paris, but not *la Paris*, is proper when ſpeaking of the city. It may be the name of a perſon; or it may be an alluſion intelligible only to the king and his correſpondent. T.

life,

life, and learn gaiety and content from your countrymen.

You mention two perſons to me, of the firſt of whom only I have any knowledge; the author of a book intitled *Des Mœurs*. I leave the choice of them to you. Take him who is the moſt docile, gay, and equal-tempered, and offer him the place of La Mettrie, with the annexed conditions, ſuch as you know them to be.

Poor Maupertuis is not well. I wiſh he may recover, but I begin to doubt. Endeavour to become intimate with D'Alembert, and try whether he will nibble at our bait. Inform me what you think on the ſubject, that I may know whether any thing can be done. * * * * *

* *

Recollect what I told you, concerning phyſicians; and learn that, in this country, where the air is ſaid to be ſo bad, an old woman, a few days ſince, a French refugee, died here at the age of ninety-eight; and a man at the age of one hundred and two; but, ſince ſo the faculty have determined, remain at Paris till the month of September, only take care to keep your hand on your purſe-ſtrings. Aſtruc and Sennaca love money better than their patients.

I am much obliged to the gentlemen who, you tell me, intereſted themſelves concerning my

my individual perſon, without knowing me. Had they converſed with me but one quarter of an hour, my fame would have vaniſhed! This it is to be known only by report. Perhaps, were the beauteous Helena again to make her appearance, inſtead of adoring her, men would pelt her with rotten apples. Perhaps, had we converſed with the ſhoe-maker of Trajan, he would have robbed the world of a part of the high opinion which it has entertained of that emperor. Ah! My dear D'Arget, ſuch are we mortals! We are dazzled by riſing fame. A name of too much renown is a moſt wearieſome burthen.

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LETTER X.

From the King.

Potſdam, Auguſt, 1752.

I AM ſupplied with a reader, my dear D'Arget; I have no need therefore of Morand, Monterif, or Mouhy. I ſhall wear out my own ears ſooner than the lungs of the abbé de Prades, and

and that is all I want. * * * * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *
We muſt oppoſe pain by fortitude, and expel melancholy by the aid of mirth. Remember my advice, and practiſe it as much as you can.

Poor Maupertuis is not well. I have reaſon to fear we ſhall loſe him. I know none but D'Alembert who can fill his place. See what is to be done. I do not think it is his humour to confeſs; and he might lead an agreeable and happy life at Berlin. Try, ſound the ſhore, take out your compaſs, and make a lunge at a venture.

La Touche is arrived, and is infinitely more agreeable to us than the mylord. God forgive me, but I have an averſion to the Engliſh race, of which I know not how to correct myſelf. The ſins of the monarch are viſited upon the people. I ſhall depart in a few days for Sileſia, and hope to ſee you here at my return. How precious is health! And how much does it coſt the art of pharmacy to * * * * * * * * * * * * * *
Vale.

FREDERIC.

LETTER XI.

From M. D'Arget.

SIRE, Paris, September 18, 1752.

IF ever unfortunate mortal might with reaſon complain, that mortal certainly am I. I am penetrated by your majeſty's bounty, which I have put to the teſt. You granted me the favour of allowing me to come here for the recovery of my health, and here have I been almoſt ſix months. Pain, aſſiduity, and expence, have all been ſubmitted to, in order to ſucceed; but all to no purpoſe. I am not any better. My malady, I am aſſured, is a mixture of ſcurvy and virus; and the phyſicians aſk till the month of January, to eradicate it by mild but certain remedies, which muſt be aided by the air of this place, to produce their entire effect. The phyſician, who is willing to undertake my cure, does not require payment till he has ſucceeded. My relations preſs me to commit myſelf to his care; and ſo will have it, under pain of diſinheritance. My friends ſolicit me; the love of life almoſt impoſes it on me as a law; for, it is affirmed, I ſhall not live two years, ſhould I return

turn with my malady; but I have not nor could I promiſe any thing. I depend on your majeſty; and that much more from attachment, and reſpectful gratitude, than from duty.

My ſituation is afflicting. I wiſh to live and I fear to diſpleaſe your majeſty, and to weary your kindneſs and patience. The public is unacquainted, and perhaps you yourſelf, ſire, are ignorant how much thoſe are attached to you, who have the happineſs to know you; yet were I to riſk my life to gratify this attachment, inſtead of attributing it to the true motive, it would rather be placed to the account of intereſt and ambition. I therefore repeat to your majeſty, I entreat you to ſuppoſe yourſelf in my ſituation, to fix my irreſolution, for ſuſpenſe is the ſevereſt pang of the ſoul; and even venture to aſk your advice, as that of the moſt enlarged mind with which I am acquainted, and your commands as thoſe of the beſt maſter on earth. They ſhall be executed without repugnance, whether it be to remain here, ſhould you ſtill have the goodneſs to grant me this laſt favour, or to return as ſoon as I ſhall have received your majeſty's orders, from performing of which neither the difficulty of roads, weather, my feeble health, nor in fine any other cauſe, ſhall deter me. I will conform to the will of your majeſty; and, if I

periſh in the attempt, I ſhall at leaſt periſh, according to my manner, in the bed of honour.

I have taken ſuch ſteps, reſpecting M. D'Alembert, as were preſcribed to me, by your majeſty. He feels the whole worth of the place you intended to beſtow on him, for which he is penetrated with gratitude; but the love of his country, the enjoyment of abſolute liberty, the fear of loſing the intercourſe he maintains with his friends, and a delicate conſtitution, which, according to him, can only exiſt in his native air, are all motives which are victorious over the ſplendid dignity that awaits him at Berlin. But it is a debt I owe, to him and truth, to aſſure your majeſty that his only regret is his inability to approach your perſon; at which I am the more chagrined, becauſe he merits this diſtinction more than any man. His extent of knowledge, the qualities of his heart, and the gifts of his underſtanding, are uncommon; but he is a philoſopher, who is faithful to his principles, and who knows no other wealth than that of life and liberty. Such in fine as your majeſty would have been, had it not been the will of fate that you ſhould be born to aſcend a throne. His income is exceedingly moderate, and he faithfully promiſes himſelf to repair for enjoyment into Pruſſia, ſhould the ill temper of the theolo-

theologians ever render it an act of neceſſity to quit the country he loves, and in which he is beloved. He feels that under your laws only ſhould a philoſopher take refuge. This is the opinion of all thinking people.

I lately dined, at the houſe of M. de la Tour, with a man whom I ſaw penetrated with all the ſentiments ſo juſtly due to your majeſty. His name is M. von Frey-Chapelle, formerly vice grand equerry* to the king of England, in Hanover. I believe he would think himſelf happy in your majeſty's ſervice, if he could there find proper employment. He appears to me a man of ſenſe and merit, converſant in horſes, and in the ſuperintendence of a ſtud. People, who are his friends, have informed me that many places have been offered him in various courts; but he would not accept of any which might gratify that kind of reſentment which is entertained againſt him at Hanover. He is a Roman catholic; but he appears to me to be an unprejudiced man, and to poſſeſs an infinite fund of zeal, and admiration, for your majeſty. Theſe have been the ſource of his intimacy with M. de la Tour, who openly profeſſes being entirely devoted to you.

* *Vice grand-ecuyer.* I believe this ſignifies the ſame as—Deputy-maſter of the horſe. T.

I wait here with obedience, reſignation, and impatience, for the commands which it ſhall pleaſe your majeſty to give, concerning the things contained in this long letter, for which I entreat your majeſty's patience, and indulgence.

I am, &c.

LETTER XII.

From the King.

September, 1752.

YOU perceive, my good D'Arget, how various are the accidents of this world * * *

I am exceedingly well ſatisfied with my little anathematiſed heretic, who ſerves me as a reader. Potſdam will truly become the rendezvous of the excommunicated. Admire the ways of Providence! The thunder ſtrikes not here (in this wicked place) yet its bolts deſcend on holy places, and on churches!

Credulous D'Arget! Make trial of the ſcience of empirics at Paris, of the virtues of your natal air, and of the potency of St. Genevieve! Satisfy the wiſhes of ſignora Martha, Maria, and Salome! But I fear you will return as you went. My opinion ſtill continues the ſame, concerning your diſeaſe. *Exerciſe*—and you will be well.

Adieu. May the prayers of an excommunicated and raſh heretic, who ſmells of ſchiſm, who advances ill adviſed, erroneous, and blaſphemous propoſitions, ſoften the compaſſion of nature in your behalf, and reſtore you a portion of that gaiety which, in your country, degenerates into folly.

FREDERIC.

LETTER XIII.

From the King.

Potſdam, April, 1753.

I VERY much fear, my poor D'Arget, that you have reaſon to repent of your journey into France. You have paſſed through the hands of ſome demi-dozen quacks, who have completely ruined your health. Your only diſeaſe was obſtruction in the abdomen, which drugs of every kind, and all of a contrary tendency, have increaſed; and, if I may judge from what you tell me, I greatly fear your lungs are affected; in which caſe, there is little hope I ſhall ever ſee you again.

I am not aſtoniſhed that the quarrel between our ſages ſhould be the ſubject of converſation at Paris. Voltaire is the moſt malignant lunatic I ever was acquainted with. He is excellent only in his writings. It is impoſſible you ſhould imagine all the duplicity, and infamous knavery, of which he has here been guilty. My indignation riſes to perceive that ſo much wit, and ſo much knowledge, ſhould not render men better. I have taken the part of Maupertuis, becauſe he is a very worthy man; and becauſe the other

had

had endeavoured to effect his ruin; but I did not ſecond his revenge in the manner he wiſhed. A little ſuperabundance of vanity rendered Maupertuis too ſenſible of the manœuvres of a monkey; that, after having been whipped, ought to have been deſpiſed.

For my own part, I continue my uſual train, and am very well ſatisfied with my little heretic*; who, let the doctors of the Sorbonne ſay what they pleaſe, is a good fellow. I employ myſelf as uſual, in ſtudy.

Should you ſee the fat marquis, inform him that I ſtill intereſt myſelf concerning him; and that our rude good ſenſe, as Monteſquieu ſays, renders our nation conſtant in its attachments.

Adieu, my poor D'Arget. I very much fear I ſhall receive ill news of your health; I nevertheleſs wiſh I may be deceived.

FREDERIC.

* The abbé de Prades. T.

LET-

LETTER XIV.

From M. D'Arget.

SIRE, Paris, June 11, 1753.

I RATHER conſulted my zeal, and my courage, than my ſtrength, when I hoped to return to the feet of your majeſty. My ill health ſtill continues, attended with the moſt alarming ſymptoms. The diſeaſe alternately attacks the region of the veſica and the lungs; and I am well convinced that I am, for life, reduced to this unfortunate ſituation. I had diſcontinued medicine, that I might recover ſufficient ſtrength for my journey; but the malignant humours which overcome me would not admit of any interval of attack, and I am threatened with the worſt accidents, ſhould I quit my native air, which is the only reſource that remains for me, in my preſent cruel condition. I myſelf feel that here only can I perhaps continue to vegetate a few years; and I ſee myſelf obliged to renounce the happineſs of again appearing in your majeſty's preſence. Nor muſt I, by new delay, weary your patience; nay it makes my heart continually tremble, leſt I ſhould have too much abuſed this patience already.

Let

Let your majeſty deign to recollect the favours you have heaped upon me, during almoſt eight years, the honourable manner in which I was placed under your majeſty, and the hopes with which I might flatter myſelf; recollect alſo the reality of my devotedneſs, by the knowledge you have of my character, and you will then perceive that the love of life, and the hope of prolonging it, are the ſole reaſons which could induce me to ſacrifice advantages which ſo entirely gratified my feelings, and my ambition.

Your majeſty would pity me, did you ſee the ſituation in which I am, while writing this letter. By how many thoughts am I diſtracted! I cannot ſupport the idea of for ever loſing your favours. Deign to continue them to me! I will not ceaſe to deſerve them; I will ever appertain to your majeſty by my prayers, my attachment, and my gratitude; and, ſhould but my health recover ſtability, I will eagerly repair again to devote my ſervices to my royal maſter. I wiſh not to ceaſe to be your ſervant, but in ceaſing to live; and would only live by your benefits. Such happineſs would crown all the hopes I now can entertain. God is my witneſs thoſe hopes all centre in your majeſty. I know too well your goodneſs of heart not to flatter myſelf you will not forſake me; or not to depend at leaſt

on

on your protection and ſupport, on ſuch occaſions when I ſhall implore you to grant them. To remember, and betoken bounty for, a ſervant whoſe misfortunes tear him from you, were worthy of your majeſty.

I throw myſelf at your majeſty's feet, to entreat you will be pleaſed to grant me a diſmiſſion, correſpondent to the ſatisfaction which you have been pleaſed to teſtify of my ſervices, and which will be my witneſs that I am not overwhelmed with diſgrace; for this my zeal, my fidelity, and my attachment, have never merited.

I renew my proteſtations to your majeſty, and, with thoſe ſentiments, and that moſt profound reſpect, which to the laſt moment of life I ſhall entertain,

I am, &c.

LETTER XV.

From the King.

June 26, 1753.

I AM ſorry, my good D'Arget, that your diſeaſe will not allow you to return to my ſervice. I ſend you the diſmiſſion, which I never ſhould have ſent had you not aſked it yourſelf.

ſelf. You will always find me ready to give you pleaſure, in every thing which depends on me. I wiſh with all my heart you may recover, and I thank you very ſincerely for all the ſervices which you have done me.

FREDERIC.

P. S. I would willingly leave you my bundle of follies, but that they might take wing after your death; and you know how much I fear to paſs for a poet.

LETTER XVI.

From the King.

Potſdam, December 1, 1753.

I RECEIVED the letter which you were kind enough to write, on the 7th of the laſt month, and am exceedingly ſenſible of the attention which you ſo eagerly indicate. Whatever comes from you I receive with pleaſure; and you may be certain of the remembrance and eſteem in which I hold you, notwithſtanding your abſence.

It will depend on yourſelf to ſend for your ſon, and give him a good education, under your own inſpection. You have only to make ſuch arrangements

rangements as you think proper, for I ſhall never prevent him from being reſtored to your tenderneſs.

I ſhall very willingly think myſelf indebted to you if, ſometimes, according to your convenience, you will ſend intelligence of what is paſſing; in which caſe you have only to addreſs your letters to the marquis D'Argens.

FREDERIC.

LETTER XVII.

From the King.

Berlin, January 7, 1754.

I AM well perſuaded of the ſincerity of your good wiſhes to me, and of your attachment to my perſon. You lived with me long enough to make me acquainted with the goodneſs of your heart, by which you have always merited my eſteem. I moſt truly wiſh you better health.

You will give me pleaſure by aiding my agent in his inquiries after a dancer; but, ſhould you find one, do not conclude any agreement, till you have firſt written to me.

Drive melancholy away, and endeavour to enable yourſelf to enjoy life and the world, which

perhaps is more attached to you than you to it, &c.

FREDERIC.

LETTER XVIII.

From the King.

Potſdam, February 25, 1754.

THE gout, my dear D'Arget, is a great evil, but the ſpleen is the worſt of evils. Should the gout therefore relieve the liver, to have the gout will not be an evil, but a good. This is a trifling tribute which muſt be paid, at an age which inceſſantly removes us from the moment of our origin, and drags us forward toward that of deſtruction. But, ſhould I continue to write in this tone, you might miſtake my letter for an extract from the quatrains of Pibrac*.

You have given me great pleaſure, by ſending me news from Paris, and of the poet. His

* Gui du Faur, lord of Pibrac, a famous magiſtrate and ſtateſman under Charles IX. and Henry III. of France, wrote quatrains, or poetical moral ſentences of four lines, which were once ſo highly eſteemed that they were tranſlated into the Greek, Latin, Turkiſh, Arabic, and Perſian languages; and children learned them by rote. T.

character

character conſoles me for the regret I feel at his ſuperiority of underſtanding.

The winter has been a dreadful one. Well have you divined that I ſhall remain ſhut up in my chamber; where, to own the truth, I ſhall be more ſolitary than I could wiſh to be. Our ſociety is diſperſed, gone to the devil. The madman is in Switzerland, the Italian is boring a hole through the moon, Maupertuis is on his truckle bed, and D'Argens has hurt his little finger, ſo that he wears his arm in a ſcarf, as if he had been wounded by a cannon ball, before Philipſburg. Such is the news of Potſdam. Aſk me for nothing more. I live with my books, and converſe with the people of the Auguſtan age. I ſhall ſoon be as little acquainted with the living as the late Jordan was with the ſtreets of Berlin.

It is here reported you are going to war; if ſo, I ſhall be ſorry for your marine. Three years at leaſt are neceſſary, advantageouſly to face that of England. But, be it war or peace, in America, the fire has ſtill far to travel before it can reach our frontiers.

Adieu, my good D'Arget. I will not apoſtrophiſe you with a ſolemn—I pray to God to take you into his holy keeping.

LETTER XIX.

From the King.

Potſdam, March 23, 1754.

I THANK you for the dancers you have procured for me. You know the welcome I always give to French officers, who happen to viſit Pruſſia; you therefore ought not to doubt but that M. de Quincy, of whom you ſpeak to me in your letter, will be received with like favour, and that I ſhall grant him the uſual protection and kind treatment.

Send me intelligence of Voltaire whenever you obtain any, be it of what kind it will. I am much obliged to you for your attention to afford me marks of being ſtill attached to me, &c.

FREDERIC.

LETTER XX.

From the King.

Potſdam, April 1, 1754.

I AM very ſorry, my poor D'Arget, to hear you are continually in bed. You ſee it is

not the climate which is the cauſe of this, but the diſeaſe you bear about you.

I want a couple more dancers, a man and woman. Cannot you, in Paris, find ſome agreeable huſſy, with wicked eyes, a pleaſing face, and an elegant ſhape, who ſhall be willing to come and caper on our Berlin ſtage? If you can you will confer an additional obligation on me.

Would you believe that Voltaire, after all the tricks he has played me, has made attempts to return? But Heaven preſerve me from him! He is good to read, but a dangerous companion.

The marquis, here preſent, ſends his compliments to you; and, for my own part, I aſſure you that, during life, I ſhall more highly eſteem the qualities of your heart than all the dazzling ones of the wits. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER XXI.

From M. D'Arget.

SIRE, Vincennes, April 27, 1754.

THE happineſs of teſtifying my zeal and devotedneſs to your majeſty will make me work miracles; and, perhaps, to find a dancer ſuch as

as your majeſty requires would be nothing leſs than miraculous. When ſuch girls are handſome, Paris is their Peru, which they never will forſake. Be it as it may, the intereſts of your theatre are entruſted to the ſieur Petit, your majeſty's agent; and, I dare aſſure you, no man is more capable than he is of theſe kind of negotiations. It is but juſt he ſhould have all the honour, ſince he has all the trouble; and he has given me to underſtand that to endeavour to ſecond him would but be to interfere in his buſineſs.

A watchmaker of the name of Caen, I underſtand, is immediately to depart for Berlin. He is an excellent workman, and your majeſty has in him made a good acquiſition.

I am not ſurpriſed at the attempts of M. de Voltaire to return to your majeſty; his underſtanding is too great not to act rationally once in his life. But your repugnance, ſire, is equally well founded, ſince he has had the misfortune eſſentially to fail in his duty to you. What your majeſty has been pleaſed to write to me, on the ſubject, has given me the greater pleaſure becauſe it had been reported, here, that you had ſhewn ſome inclination to ſee him again. I even know that the preſident * has been in dreadful

* M. de Maupertuis. T.

apprehenſions. If I be not miſtaken, ſome very ſingular things will one day be known, on this ſubject. We are at preſent kept in darkneſs; but, be it as it may, the glory of your majeſty is, and ever will be, triumphant over all.

Man is authoriſed in amuſing himſelf with agreeable things, when he is continually effecting that which is uſeful; and princes will be judged, by ſages and by poſterity, according to the latter. Why muſt not *L'Epître à votre Eſprit* *, ſire, be given to the world? Your majeſty ought to indulge its publication clandeſtinely, ſince it would but be to publiſh the beſt of poſſible apologies.

It is aſſerted here that M. de Voltaire will paſs the ſummer at Plombieres, and that he will afterwards take up his reſidence at Straſburg. He has made ſome attempts to go to Luneville †. But all thoſe who are dependant on this country, will never yield to any thing, which may appear to depart from the particular reſpect in which every perſon in France delights to hold your majeſty.

It is true, ſire, that my health is very much deranged. The winter has been too ſevere, and too long; every kind of *climate* has aſſem-

* The epiſtle to your underſtanding.

† The reſidence of Staniſlaus, nominal king of Poland. T.

bled

bled here *, and no one knows better than your majeſty how much the ſoul of ſenſibility is affected, by all ſurrounding objects. This unfortunate gift of Nature is not weakened in me; and the recollection of your majeſty's favours often aſſails my heart and mind, in the moſt touching manner. The kindneſs with which you deign to continue them, ſire, redoubles ſuch feelings. Let me venture to entreat your majeſty not to withdraw your gracious proofs. I continually depend indubitably on the protection which you have pleaſed to promiſe me, and on your ſupport do I found my greateſt hopes. It is natural to your majeſty's goodneſs of heart to be pleaſed that I ſhould owe my happineſs to you, even at this diſtance; and by holding it thus its value will be doubled.

I add the copies of two letters, which make a great noiſe at Paris, and which are authentic.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, ſire, &c.

* *Tous les climats ſe ſont reſſemblés.* There is reaſon to ſuppoſe an error of the preſs, and that inſtead of *climats* the word ſhould be *frimats*; i. e. every kind of *cold*. Every kind of climate would include heat and fine weather. T.

LETTER XXII.

From the King.

May 13, 1754.

I AM very much obliged to you, my good D'Arget, for the trouble you have taken concerning my theatre, and have no doubt but your pious intentions toward it will be the harbingers of good fortune.

You will laugh, in deſpite of your hypochondria, to be told that I have received letters from Maupertuis and Voltaire on the ſame day, filled with abuſe on each other. They ſuppoſe me to be a common ſewer, into which they may empty all their filth. I have written a laconic anſwer to the poet, and have ſatisfied myſelf with making the mathematician recollect that his underſtanding departs from the centre of gravity, whenever he hears the name of Voltaire.

I thank Heaven that my paſſions are not ſo warm as thoſe of theſe people, otherwiſe I ſhould be at war all my life. The phlegm of our good Germans, ſay what you will, is more ſociable then the petulance of your wits. It is true, according to your own confeſſion, that we are dull and heavy; and that we have the misfortune to have good ſenſe. But, were you to

chooſe a friend, where would you fix your choice? Wit, my dear D'Arget, is only paint, which conceals the deformity of the features; but leſs ſplendid good ſenſe, from its very propriety, leads to virtue; and without virtue men could not aſſociate.

But I ought not to ſermonize with your ſpleen; neither would I, did I not know you are in a country in which you may procure all that diſſipation which can puff away the fumes of my morality.

Adieu, my dear D'Arget, * * * * * * * * * and be merry: you have nothing elſe to do in this world.

FREDREIC.

LETTER XXIII.

From M. D'Arget.

SIRE, Vincennes, June 10, 1754.

I OWN I could not have thought that your majeſty could ſtill have been diſturbed, by the quarrel between meſſieurs de Maupertuis and de Voltaire. This unfortunate diſpute has continued but too long. My ſpleen could not reſiſt a laugh at the obſervation of your ma-

jeſty, in which you have ſo agreeably ſaid— "Theſe gentlemen ſuppoſe you to be a com- "mon ſewer, into which they may empty all "their filth." By this expreſſion I perceive your majeſty is not, nor ever has been, *diſturbed* by ſuch contentions; but that you have felt as became the ſuperiority of your genius and your rank. And this is a truth the demonſtration of which is ſo far from being indifferent, here, to your perſonal glory, that I have ventured to indulge myſelf in the indiſcretion of imparting, to ſome perſons who are intereſted in whatever affects your majeſty, that which you have had the goodneſs to write to me on this ſubject.

What you afterward add is another proof of that which I have remarked, with ſo much pleaſure, concerning your character. The following is the paſſage; nor can you but be pleaſed ſire, to read that which you have ſo well expreſſed. "Wit is only paint, which con- "ceals the deformity of the features; but leſs "ſplendid good ſenſe, from its very propriety, "leads to virtue; and without virtue men "could not aſſociate." Theſe are touches which depict the heart of your majeſty; and ſociety gains, by becoming acquainted with hearts like yours. For this reaſon, theſe expreſſions affected thoſe to whom I ſhewed them, and

and who were capable of loving the man in the great king. I have been told that your thoughts had reached the ear of M. de Maupertuis, and that he had been exceedingly diſturbed by them; but this no doubt is an act of ridicule gratuitouſly imputed to him; and he ought to be pleaſed, from the attachment which I know he bears to your majeſty, that you publicly appear no farther to intereſt yourſelf, in his quarrel, than perhaps as he himſelf ought to be intereſted; that is for your amuſement. He would then grant his enemy peace, according to your majeſty's example.

I thought it incumbent, on the reſpectful confidence which I have devoted to your majeſty, to render you an account of my conduct, which might otherwiſe ſo be interpreted to you as to deprive me of your favour, for which I never ſhould be conſoled. My intentions are upright, and have always been guided by my attachment to your majeſty; and I will venture to ſay this motive muſt induce your majeſty to pardon errors which zeal too ardent might occaſion me to commit. Yet, can it be a crime to make ſociety acquainted with your qualities?

Your majeſty ſtill recollects the pleaſant trap in which you caught me one day, on the ſubject of the Germans. So far am I from diſputing the

the ſecurity of being acquainted with them that I loudly, and daily, proclaim I never ſuffered the leaſt vexation, which was occaſioned me by their means, with your majeſty; and that all the chagrin I may have met with was effected by the French, and the nation of wits, who never could forgive me for behaving leſs like a lunatic than themſelves. This, preciſely, was the only ſpecies of pain I had to encounter in your majeſty's ſervice. Not all the pleaſures of the country I inhabit will rob me of the recollection of your majeſty's bounty, or of the ſentiments of that moſt tender and reſpectful attachment which I owe to you, in the manner in which you deign to continue this bounty; which I only can merit by the honeſty of my heart; and I dare proteſt to your majeſty that this heart will ever be moſt devotedly yours. Condeſcend therefore continually to accept the homage it pays you.

I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXIV.

From the King.

July 29, 1754.

I RECEIVED your letter, my good D'Arget, after returning from the tour which I have made into Franconia, to viſit my two ſiſters. Maupertuis is come back, and, what is very extraordinary, not a word yet has paſſed concerning Voltaire. Algarotti has taken flight, and has ſettled at Venice, where he has married a woman who, it is ſaid, will bring him wealth. Thus is our company broken up, and you gentlemen will make me begin houſe-keeping anew, in my own deſpite. If you ſee Valori, give my compliments to him.

I am now going to Sans-Souci, where I ſhall peaceably take the waters, without hearing of the quarrels of fanatics, the remonſtrances of parliaments, or the envious intrigues of wits.

Adieu, my good D'Arget; I wiſh you eaſe and cheerfulneſs, but eſpecially * * *

LETTER XXV.

From M. D'Arget.

SIRE, Vincennes, Auguſt 3, 1754.

THE goodneſs of your majeſty has induced you to wiſh me health, and cheerfulneſs; but the latter is only to be found at Potſdam; and with reſpect to eaſe, I might have enjoyed more there than in any other part of the world, had I poſſeſſed health, and not had a ſon. But to theſe is ſacrificed the happineſs of my life; which, from my attachment to you, would be to find myſelf at your feet; and the recollection of thoſe moments, when ſuch was my ſituation, will always diſturb my repoſe, amid even the pleaſures which may be taſted at Paris, ſhould I ever be wealthy enough to procure ſuch pleaſures. But of this I have great reaſon to doubt, if the protection and ſupport of your majeſty ſhould not prevail on the miniſtry to do ſomething for me. On this my hopes are placed, and I continually flatter myſelf that your majeſty, who has deigned to give me your promiſe, will not refuſe to realize thoſe hopes, whenever an opportunity ſhall offer.

M. de Voltaire is ſtill at Plombieres, where his nieces have been to viſit him, and it is not known

known where he will go afterward. His ſtay at the abbey of Senonne, with the celebrated *Don Calmet*, had given riſe to many ridiculous reports, concerning his pretended converſion. But he has ſent ſeveral articles exceedingly well written to M. D'Alembert, for the Encyclopedie, and has added a letter, the contents of which do not depict a man ſubdued by prejudices.

I firſt heard of the marriage of count Algarotti from your majeſty, in whom you have loſt a very agreeable man. Should your majeſty think like me, you will begin houſe-keeping anew (an expreſſion which you yourſelf have obligingly deigned to uſe) with great regret.

The letter which I have received, from the abbé de Prades, very much afflicted me at firſt, from the fear I was in leſt the edition of your works ſhould be loſt, or miſlaid, which might very much diſturb your majeſty. But where is the probability that the whole edition could have been loſt? I perfectly recollect that only a ſingle copy, of the ſmall quarto edition in queſtion, was printed for your travelling library; which circumſtance perhaps your majeſty had forgotten. All the other large paper copies were very exactly ſecured, at the palace of Berlin, in the printing-office; agreeably to the notice which I ſent of them, to the abbé de

Prades, the very moment after I received his letter. My fears, however, will not be entirely calmed till my conjectures ſhall be confirmed, which favour I expect from your majeſty's bounty. You know how much a man, ſo melancholy as I am, may be affected, when his mind is diſturbed.

I ardently wiſh that the waters, which you mean to take at Sans-Souci, may produce a ſalutary effect; then will the moſt fervent of my prayers be heard.

I cannot conclude without venturing to tell your majeſty how generally two things, which you have lately done here, have been approved. I mean the nomination of the baron von Kniphauſen for your ambaſſador, and the favour which you have conferred on M. D'Alembert. I well know that the opinion of the vulgar does not influence your majeſty; but, as madame de Sevigné ſaid on the marriage of her ſon, it is ſtill ſomething when the public is ſatisfied.

May you long live, ſire, to make others happy, and to be happy yourſelf. The marquis de Valori is exceedingly ſenſible of the honour of being remembered by your majeſty, and very ſincerely, and reſpectfully, throws himſelf at your feet.

I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXVI.

From M. D'Arget.

SIRE, Vincennes, October 5, 1754.

FROM your majeſty only can I hope for fortune and happineſs; and the opportunity is come when I may derive both from your bounty, and protection. Theſe you have deigned to promiſe me, and on them I totally rely.

M. de Sechelles, who has been appointed comptroller general of the finances, and who, in that quality, diſtributes all ſolid and pecuniary favours, preſerves all thoſe ſentiments for your majeſty which he conceived at Prague, where he had the happineſs to be perſonally known to you; and I am convinced he will eagerly ſeize every occaſion of doing whatever may be agreeable to your majeſty. My fortune will undoubtedly be made, ſhould you deign to grant me a letter of recommendation to this miniſter, and, in this letter, be pleaſed to inform him of the particular kindneſs with which you honour me, and of the perſonal ſatisfaction you would feel ſhould M. de Sechelles, in conſideration of this, be good enough to beſtow on me ſome advantageous

geous poſt, in any of the ſub-departments of finance.

This favour would, to me, be complete victory; and I ſhould owe to your majeſty the power of being able freely, and tranquilly, to live wherever I ſhould pleaſe, as well as a releaſe from the tyranny of employment, which always becomes difficult and painful when the health is ſo much injured as mine is. I farther moſt reſpectfully entreat your majeſty to inform the baron von Kniphauſen of the protection which you ſhall deign to grant me, on this occaſion; that he may be authoriſed to require it may be effectual, from the comptroller general. And, ſhould your majeſty not think proper to write to M. de Sechelles, which however you had the goodneſs to do ſeveral times, while I had the honour to be in your ſervice, I venture to ſupplicate you would give orders to the baron von Kniphauſen to preſent me to him, on your majeſty's part, and to inform him of what I have been bold enough to entreat your majeſty to write; and that you would have the goodneſs to ſpeak, on the ſubject, to the chevalier de la Touche.

But the letter of your majeſty would be of far greater importance to me; and, as that favour would be more marked, I again venture moſt ardently

dently to requeſt it, with the more hope that I ſhall be ſucceſsful. Let your majeſty be pleaſed to recollect that, by your recommendation, you made the fortune of the brother of M. de Maupertuis, and likewiſe that of the brother of M. de Chaſot, who had not the happineſs to be perſonally known to you; and that, when you beſtow a favour ſo great on me, your majeſty will deign to reward an old ſervant, who has continually been devoted to you, and with whoſe ſervices you have kindly been pleaſed not to appear diſſatisfied. Nor will ſuch a recommendation in the leaſt be derogatory to your majeſty. This I can ſolemnly proteſt, for it is cuſtomary for ſuch favours to be only granted to the moſt powerful protection.

As the affairs of finance are treated on during the king's reſidence at Fontainebleau, I very much deſire I might be able to go there, and preſent the letter which I expect, from the bounty of your majeſty, with the moſt reſpectful confidence, &c.

I am, &c.

LETTER XXVII.

From the King.

Potſdam, October 19, 1754.

I RECEIVED your letter, dated the 5th of this month, and ſhall be glad if I can any way contribute to promote your fortune. To this effect I ſhall give orders to my ambaſſador at Paris, baron von Kniphauſen, to preſent you to M. de Sechelles, and to recommend you, from me, as an old and good ſervant, in whom I met with zeal and attachment, and for whom I wiſh to have the obligation, to the ſaid miniſter, of obtaining a good eſtabliſhment in your own country. I have no doubt but this will produce a fortunate effect, which will give me the more pleaſure as I ſhall be delighted to ſee you contented and happy.

FREDERIC.

LETTER XXVIII.

From M. D'Arget.

SIRE, November 9, 1754.

I WAIT the execution of the orders which the baron von Kniphauſen muſt have received from your majeſty, ſuch as you have deigned to announce them to me, in your letter of the 19th of October. Favours ſo marked muſt be productive of the moſt advantageous effects to me, eſpecially if your majeſty would but be pleaſed to ſpeak a word to the chevalier de la Touche, that he may write accordingly to Paris. My fortune will be the work of your majeſty, a work which I hope you will not abandon; as I alſo do that, ſhould it be abſolutely neceſſary for my ſucceſs, your majeſty will deign to grant me a letter perſonally addreſſed to M. de Sechelles. You know mankind, nor can you be ignorant how much theſe things become individually their own, and intereſting to themſelves, when they emanate from a great man, and a great king.

I only wiſh for this trifling good fortune that I may procure myſelf that freedom without which there is no true happineſs, and of which

I ſhall make no other uſe than that of occaſionally coming to lay my wiſhes, my very happineſs, and my reſpectful gratitude, at your majeſty's feet. This hope is the firſt of all my projects, and let me entreat your majeſty not to deſtroy an idea by which I am animated and ſuſtained.

I know the pleaſure your majeſty takes in the works of Lancret, and I here add an account of ten pictures, by this maſter, which I have prevailed on one of my friends to part with, ſhould they happen to pleaſe your majeſty. It is the opinion of every body that they are the moſt agreeable of the performances of this painter, as well for correctneſs of drawing as for the pleaſingneſs of the figures. Should your majeſty think proper to ſend me any orders, on this ſubject, they ſhall be executed with all poſſible preciſion. The pictures are in ſuch good condition, even to the very frames, that when they arrive they have only to be hung in their places.

M. de Voltaire is ſtill in Alſatia with his niece Madame Denis. His Rome Sauvée * will be revived this winter. It is expected the Triumvirate of Crebillon will be played, when the court returns from Fontainebleau, concerning the ſucceſs of which opinions are divided. The

* Rome Saved.

players

players think very highly of it; and, what is very certain, and which could not happen in any other country, is that, all the boxes were taken for the firſt nights of the performance of this tragedy, before the parts were diſtributed to the actors.

I am, &c.

LETTER XXIX.

From the King.

Potſdam, December 14, 1754.

I CANNOT comply with the requeſt of your laſt letter; beſide that I think it would be to no purpoſe, ſince M. de Sechelles will eaſily perceive that I intereſt myſelf in your favour, as ſoon as you ſhall be preſented by my miniſter.

With reſpect to the pictures, I can only inform you that I have no longer the ſame taſte; or rather that I have enough of that kind. At preſent I willingly buy the works of Rubens, of Vandyck, or in a word the pictures of the great painters, both of the Flemiſh and the French ſchool. Should you know of any one to ſell, you will give me pleaſure by ſending me notice.

My ſentiments reſpecting yourſelf are always

the ſame, and you may reſt perſuaded I will do you ſervice whenever I can.

FREDERIC.

P. S. Do not wonder at the manner in which this letter is ſcrawled, for my ſecretary is one of the cats of the Sorbonne.

LETTER XXX.

From M. D'Arget.

SIRE, December 24, 1754.

I HAVE been preſented to M. de Sechelles, and he paid every proper attention to the reſpectable recommendation of your majeſty. I hope it will produce a ſalutary effect, which I have every reaſon to ſuppoſe, eſpecially if the baron von Kniphauſen will but occaſionally remind the comptroller-general. I requeſt, as a favour, that your majeſty would be pleaſed to recommend this to him; and likewiſe to have the extreme goodneſs to ſpeak a word on the ſubject to the chevalier de la Touche. Whatever leads to good fortune, even in an inferior degree, is ſo prodigiouſly ſtruggled for, in this country, that nothing can prevail but the force of protection; and I have every reaſon in the world

world to hope that, honoured as I am by that of your majeſty, the modeſt demands I propoſe to make will not be refuſed. How happy ſhall I be, attached by ſentiment as I am to your majeſty, to be indebted for my eaſy circumſtances to your ſupport and favour!

M. de Voltaire has been at Lyons, where he was when the duc de Richelieu happened to paſs through the city. He went and paid his court to madame la M * * *, † by whom he was coldly received. He has been but little countenanced by the great, feared by individuals, and extremely praiſed by the people. It was ſuppoſed he would wait the return of the duc de Richelieu, which will be on the 10th of January, but he departed on the 10th of the preſent month, when he was leaſt expected ſo to do, ſtill accompanied by madame Denis, and is gone to reſide at the ſeat of Prangin, in the country of Vaux, under the government of Bern, ſituated on the lake, ſix leagues from Geneva. The houſe, which is exceedingly fine and in the moſt beautiful ſituation, has been lent him by the owner; and it is thought, at Lyons, that this motive of œconomy did not a little contribute to his departure. He has ſaid that he intends

† *Madame la Marechale*, as I ſuppoſe; that is, the dutcheſs of Richelieu. T.

to go to the baths of Aix la Chapelle, which is doubted. He is at preſent publiſhing a new edition of his Univerſal Hiſtory, at Geneva; and, it is affirmed, there is great reaſon to ſuppoſe the Maid of Orleans muſt ſoon appear. He does not attempt to diſſemble that he muſt be eternally baniſhed from France, ſhould that work become public. He amuſed himſelf, at Lyons, by making * the players act ſome of his tragedies.

The Triumvirate of Crebillon was yeſterday repreſented for the firſt time, and with very great ſucceſs. This blow will be ſenſibly felt by Voltaire. It is ſaid that he has written the Death of Cicero on the ſame plan.

The diſcourſe which M. D'Alembert pronounced, on the 19th of this month, when he was received a member of the French academy, was univerſally applauded and was written ſo to be. He has ſpoken of your majeſty as all people think.

The new year is approaching, and I dare flatter myſelf your majeſty will permit me, on this occaſion, to renew the aſſurances of the prayers which I make, and ever ſhall make during life, for your health; they are but the conſequence

* *A faire jouer*—By teaching them to act, I imagine, is what M. d'Arget meant to ſay. T.

of

of my reſpectful gratitude and devotion to your majeſty. I am, &c.

LETTER XXXI.

From M. D'Arget.

SIRE, March 12, 1755.

THE ſieur Petit has no doubt ſent your majeſty the catalogue of the pictures of M. Paſquier, formerly deputy of the trade of Normandy, and who had made a ſelect collection of the different ſchools. Theſe paintings are ſoon to be on ſale. One of the moſt conſpicuous of them is the Leda of Corregio, from the cabinet of the regent, and which the late duke of Orleans piouſly cut in four, the parts of which were fortunately ſaved from the fire by Coypel, the head excepted, which he could not protect. The parts he put together again, and the head was reſtored by De Lien. This picture, ſo beautiful in itſelf, and ſo famous for its adventures, will, it is ſaid, be ſold at not leſs than twenty-five thouſand livres. (Upwards of a thouſand pounds ſterling.) It is about ſix feet high, and five wide, and would make a magnificent appearance in the gallery preparing by your majeſty.

Voltaire has at length determined between Geneva and Rome*. He has lately cauſed Cramer, his bookſeller, to purchaſe a fine eſtate, with an excellent houſe, on the Lake of Geneva, for which he has paid eighty-ſeven thouſand two hundred livres. (Near four thouſand pounds ſterling.) He has advanced the money, and Cramer has ſold it to him, for life, for forty thouſand livres. (Almoſt ſeventeen hundred pounds.) He is now making a complete edition of his Univerſal Hiſtory, in five volumes. He ſeems determined to fix his reſidence in that country, with madame Denis. They have both ſent for all their furniture and their books. The following are ſome verſes which he wrote on the city of Lyons:

Il eſt vrai que Plutus eſt au rang de vos dieux,
Et ce n'eſt pas tant pis, pour votre aimable ville;
Il n'a point de plus bel aſile:
Ailleurs il eſt aveugle, il a chez vous des yeux;
Il n'etoit autrefois que dieu de la richeſſe,
Vous en faites le dieu des arts;
J'ai vu couler, dans vos remparts,
Les ondes du Pactole, et les eaux du Permeſſe †.

* Meaning between Calvin and the Pope. T.

† Plutus, it is true, is one of your gods, nor is he injurious to your charming city; nowhere has he a more delightful temple: in other places he is blind, but not ſo here; formerly he was only the god of riches, you have made him the god of arts, and the mingled waters of Pactolus and Hippocrene flow round your walls.

M. de Fontenelle has been in danger of death, but has recovered; and, although he is ninety-nine, he dines out every day, as he has done all his life. His mind is continually cheerful, and he is indebted for this to the tranquillity of his character. It is but three years ſince he wrote the following impromptu:

Heureux qui ne connoît que ce drôle, immodeſte,
Qui du ſexe eſt toujours vainqueur.
On ſait où le mettre de reſte,
On ne ſait où placer ſon cœur.*

This is ſuch a pleaſant manner of philoſophiſing, at ninety-nine, that I flatter myſelf your majeſty will pardon my having ſent you theſe waggiſh verſes.

The French academicians are ſucceſsfully performing the tragedy of Philoctetes, written by M. de Chateaubrun, author of the Trojans, which was performed a year ago. The characters of Ulyſſes and Philoctetes are happily depicted, after Homer. The work contains many

* "Happy is the man who is ignorant of all, except of "that immodeſt young rogue who always conquers the fair. "We know how to diſpoſe of every thing but our affections." The wit of theſe lines is of that kind which has induced me rather to let the ſpirit of them evaporate than to give it in its full force. T.

well-

well-written lines, and admirable maxims. A financier the other day obſerved of this piece—"It is very fine, but I am ſtill better pleaſed "with the *Sophocles* of *Euripides*."—The wits ſay this tragedy is the Quatrains of Pibrac dramatized. I have not yet ſeen it. I am detained here by a gouty humour, which is added to my other infirmities. Sorrowful experience teaches me to admire, much more than I formerly did, the tranquillity with which I have ſeen your majeſty ſuffer the pangs of that cruel diſeaſe. May you long be preſerved from them! The winter is very tedious, and I am in continual apprehenſions for your health, becauſe of the kind of ſolitude to which you condemn yourſelf, during that ſeaſon. Your majeſty will graciouſly indulge an old ſervant, who is at all times with equal reſpect devoted to you, while he teſtifies his alarms and his wiſhes.

I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXXII.

From M. D'Arget.

SIRE, July 8, 1755.

PEOPLE, who do not know all of which your majeſty is capable, think that royalty never can go unattended; yet has your majeſty been travelling incognito through Holland; while I have been at Liege, where I have conſulted the moſt able phyſicians on my health, and of the benefits which I might expect to receive from the Spa waters. They have informed me that I could not take them, till I firſt ſhould have undergone a ſix weeks or two months preparation, by regimen; that I muſt afterward drink of the Sauveniere, during a month, which did not agree with my leave of abſence, or the ſtate of my finances. Beſide, thanks to the infinite favour which you have deigned to teſtify for me, my content of mind and the motion of travelling have contributed to give me much better health than I had long before enjoyed; and I determined to return ſlowly, having, ſo deliciouſly to my own heart, gratified the principal object of my journey.

I am eager again to throw myſelf at your majeſty's feet, and to pay my moſt reſpectful and,

and, if I may ſo be permitted to ſay, my moſt tender thanks, for the manner in which you were pleaſed to receive me. How great is my reward, for the true and ſincere manner in which I am devoted to your majeſty! I entreat you continually, with unabating bounty, to receive my profeſſions and my homage.

I have every reaſon to hope that the new ſtep which the baron von Kniphauſen will take, in my favour, according to your majeſty's orders, with M. de Sechelles, will be productive of the moſt fortunate ſucceſs; and I once again proteſt to your majeſty that I am not deſirous of riches, except that I may occaſionally be enabled to come and ſhew you the object of your own benefactions, and acquire new motives of love and admiration at your majeſty's feet. This your majeſty was kind enough to permit and promiſe, when you took leave of me at Weſel; and I conjure you never to revoke that favour.

I ſend your majeſty a new epiſtle, by M. de Voltaire; and, while I ſend it, I wiſh it may have the merit of novelty. It contains ſome charming things, as do all his writings. He is exceſſively alarmed concerning his Maid of Orleans, copies of which are got abroad, and he trembles leſt it ſhould be printed. I found two letters from him here, on that ſubject; in one

one of them, he tells me he has ſent your majeſty the ſon of Wilhelm, whom you wiſh to have for your copyiſt, and that he has paid his travelling expences. His letters are all kind and affectionate toward me, for he thinks he has need of me.

I have ſeen a cabinet of pictures at Liege, two or three of which deſerve to be placed in the gallery of Sans Souci. I deſired a catalogue might be ſent me, without mentioning the uſe I intended to make of it, which I ſhall remit to your majeſty; and, ſhould any of the pictures ſuit your purpoſe, I have a perſon there who, when they are on ſale, can purchaſe them, with all that circumſpection which M. Mettra employs, on ſuch ſubjects. I have already been active in the buſineſs which your majeſty had the goodneſs to entruſt to me, and you may be well aſſured it is and ſhall be attended to with all poſſible care, to your entire ſatisfaction, and likewiſe after the manner of M. Mettra.

I am, with moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXXIII.

From M. D'Arget.

SIRE, Vincennes, Auguſt 22, 1755.

I HAD the honour to write and ſpeak to your majeſty of the *Orphelin de la Chine* *, a new tragedy by M. de Voltaire, which was repreſented, for the firſt time, the day before yeſterday, the 20th, and of which the beſt judges thus ſpeak.

The opening of the plot is admirable, and the pathos is ſo ſtrong that, were it, from the firſt act, progreſſively ſuſtained, it would at laſt be inſupportable. The third and fourth acts have leſs intereſt; the fifth, like that of *Rome Sauvée*, is rather too haſty. But it is generally allowed that the play is ſuperiorly written, that there are many lines which are maxims, all growing out of the ſubject; and that it contains many of thoſe particular beauties which ſeem peculiar to Voltaire. There are paſſages however which are too long, and which the perſons who act for the author, M. D'Argental and others, will take upon themſelves to retrench, for the ſecond repre-

* The Orphan of China.

ſentation.

ſentation. But they dare not touch the lines that ought to connect the paſſages, ſo that to-morrow there will be ſeveral places in which there will be four lines in ſucceſſion maſculine, or feminine. The tyrant, Genghis Khan, is a character ſimilar to that of the duke de Foix, which ſo much intereſted your majeſty. The part of the princeſs is inimitable, as is La Clairon, by whom it is acted.

Such is what is generally thought on the ſubject. There have been ſome cabals among the actors, concerning parts demanded and refuſed, which have partially infected the public, but theſe were obliged to cede to the applauſes of a moſt numerous and ſplendid audience.

There is a ſingular anecdote relative to the tragedy, which well proves the goodneſs of the author's judgment on ſuch ſubjects. When it was read at the houſe of M. D'Argental, in the preſence of ſome comedians, and men of letters and taſte, it was allowed that it was neceſſary to change the fourth act; and the manner of changing it was agreed on before the departure of the poſt. The author, who on his part had made the ſame reflections, ſent the fourth act, with alterations correſponding to their remarks, as if he himſelf had been preſent when they were made.

Marmontel, it is ſaid, claims the plot; as

being that of his Egyptus. Some of the ſituations are thought to be taken from Polyeucte * and Athalie §; but, whether ſuch charges be true or be not, every objection hitherto vaniſhes in preſence of its beauties.

A ſore throat, and rheumatic pains, which have, for a fortnight, made me keep my chamber, have prevented me from profiting by a ſeat, which had been reſerved for me, in a box, more than a month, for the firſt repreſentation.

The little ſtock of health which my extreme ſatisfaction, and the motion of travelling to Weſel, had procured me, was ſoon exhauſted; and I am once again ſubject to the ſpleen, which is inſeparable from a ſuffering ſtate, in ſouls that have not the ſtrength of that of your majeſty. But the goodneſs of your heart engages you to pity that in others which, whenever you have occaſion, you have the heroiſm to vanquiſh in yourſelf. I feel all the need I have had, and ſtill have, of that goodneſs, and I requeſt the continuation of it from your majeſty, as a benefit.

The count de Giſors fell into the water, ſome days ſince, at Metz, and would have been drowned, had not a ſoldier, of the regiment of the Lorrain guards, jumped in to his aid. It would have been a pity that a man who, ac-

* A tragedy by Corneille. § A tragedy by Racine.

cording

cording to your majeſty's own opinion, promiſes ſo fairly, ſhould have thus unfortunately periſhed.

The Maid of Orleans is hawked about the ſtreets in manuſcript. It muſt certainly be printed; and the author teſtifies a degree of apprehenſion, which muſt greatly diminiſh his joy at the ſucceſs of his Orphan.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER XXXIV.

From M. D'Arget.

SIRE, Paris, November, 1755.

I HAD great need of the laſt letter which the abbé de Prades did me the honour to write, by order of your majeſty. I entertained the moſt afflicting fears that I was no longer in your majeſty's remembrance or favour; and my ſorrow was very ſincere, ſince I venture to ſay I love your majeſty.

The Orphan of China has loſt much of its value, by being printed: ſome of the verſes are harſh, and others are ſcarcely French. Voltaire is indebted for the firſt ſucceſs of his tragedy to the acting of Le Clairon.

The immodeſt Maid of Orleans, who has ſo long been ſecluded, is now public in every ſtreet; and is offered for ſale, at the price of two guineas, in various houſes. The author has ſent a copy to Thiriot, with numerous corrections; but that which your majeſty poſſeſſes, is the true one. The dull veil of decency does not become this beauty.

It is aſſerted that the duc de Nivernois will depart at the end of the month. Your majeſty is acquainted with his underſtanding, by ſeveral of his works: you are pleaſed with his prudence and modeſty, which, as it is ſaid, ſometimes become timidity; but your majeſty knows that merit and high birth cannot always conquer this failing; and your majeſty unites in yourſelf too many of thoſe qualities which inſpire timidity, not to be diſpoſed to excuſe the failing.

From the public papers I learn all which your majeſty has lately commanded to be done, of the agreeable and the ſplendid, at the feſtivals of Charlottenberg; and I think I ſee you returning afterward, with delight, to your retreat at Potſdam. Such things affect me more than any other kind of reading. I continually place myſelf with great pleaſure in ſituations which I ſo often ſee in idea, and which I as continually hope again actually to ſee. Such reſources of the

the imagination are neceſſary, to impoſe on the real ſufferings which I endure.

The general arrangement, which has lately been made in the finances, perhaps removes the effect of the promiſes of M. de Sechelles to a great diſtance, and my ill health renders my wants preſſing. Let me conjure your majeſty to deign to renew your powerful protection. A word to M. de Sechelles, in my favour, will prevail on him to give me a place in the farm of the poſt-offices, which is ſoon to be renewed.

But ſhould your majeſty not think proper to write directly yourſelf, though that would be deciſive, I could wiſh you would be pleaſed to notice the ſubject to the marſhal de Belleiſle, or to write again to the baron von Kniphauſen, or, in fine, to ſpeak in an intereſting and favourable manner to the duc de Nivernois. I tremble while I aſk this favour of your majeſty; but my appeal is to the goodneſs of your heart. Should you deign to aſcertain my fortune, and that of my ſon, which a word would do, I can venture to aſſure you it would not derogate from your dignity. This I hope from your infinite goodneſs to me, ſire; but the moment is preſſing. The renewal of the poſt-farm will be in the courſe of the year, and it is of the utmoſt importance to me not to be anticipated. Should this buſineſs fail, which is a permanent and tran-

quil employment, and perhaps the only thing that ſuits me, all my hopes will be ſo far thrown back as to be almoſt annihilated; and, ſhould I not be fortunate enough to obtain this favour from your majeſty, let me not at leaſt have to complain that you will not pardon me for having dared to make the requeſt.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER XXXV.

From the King.

Potſdam, December 1, 1755.

I WISH I were able to do that for you which you aſk; but you ought yourſelf to be ſenſible I could not ſpeak on the buſineſs to the duc de Nivernois; and that marſhal de Belleiſle would be highly ſurpriſed ſhould he receive a letter from me in which, inſtead of the language of a ſoldier, I ſhould talk to him of the poſt-office farm. You likewiſe know I do not ſuffer any perſon to interfere in the interior adminiſtration of my provinces; and I am too juſt to aſk that from others which I do not think right for them to aſk of me. The ſervices you have rendered me may authoriſe you to demand favours in my own country; but, if I am unable to reward you myſelf, I think it would be indecent of me to wiſh others to reward you. Make

your requeſt for any thing which immediately depends on myſelf, and you will find I never forget thoſe who have been attached to me, and whom I have loved.

FREDERIC.

LETTER XXXVI.

From M. D'Arget.

SIRE, Paris, November 21, 1755.

A MEMORIAL has been remitted to me, which I have imagined to be of ſufficient importance to lay before your majeſty. The manufacturing of ſoap, the thing in queſtion, muſt be an intereſting object in your majeſty's ſtates, where, I believe, it is not made. Should the plan propoſed be agreeable to your majeſty, I will refer the perſons intereſted to your majeſty's miniſters, with them to diſcuſs their mutual intereſts.

I here add the deſcription of ſix pictures which have been propoſed to me, and which are maſterly performances in their kind. Should your majeſty imagine they might pleaſe you, they ſhall be ſhewn to the baron von Kniphauſen, who may ſettle the price with the owner, and who, till then, wiſhes to remain unknown. Notwithſtanding the perfection of the workmanſhip, I fear the ſubjects are not to the taſte of your

majeſty; and, if I am not miſtaken, you do not take much pleaſure in miniatures.

The Maid of Orleans is printed at Liege, and copies have clandeſtinely been conveyed hither. It is not a handſome edition, and is full of errors, as are all the manuſcript copies which ſwarm in the world.

Your majeſty will find the duc de Nivernois well informed, reſpecting our literature and literary anecdotes. He, as well as the marſhal de Belleiſle, and madame de Pompadour, are already all in my intereſt, merely from being told that I am an old ſervant of your majeſty's, on whom you are ſometimes pleaſed to think. What might I not hope, ſhould your majeſty deign to inform the duc de Nivernois that I am actually ſo fortunate as to be occaſionally remembered by your majeſty! The ſuppreſſion of the ſub-farms has rendered the road to wealth ſo difficult that the weight of protection alone can aſcertain ſucceſs. The patronage of your majeſty is my ſole hope, and I venture to requeſt a continuation of it, and its effects, with that reſpectful confidence in which you have been pleaſed to indulge me.

I am, with the moſt profound, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXXVII.

From the King.

Potſdam, December 5, 1755.

I HAVE no doubt that the miniatures you mention are very beautiful; I confeſs they are after the deſigns of a great maſter; but I do not love this kind of painting, nor ever have loved it, as you know.

With reſpect to the ſoap manufactory, it is a propoſal abſolutely uſeleſs for Pruſſia. Soap is made in every town, and is very cheap; neither ought you to forget how well your linen was waſhed here. I am not the leſs pleaſed with the zeal which you do not ceaſe to teſtify toward me; and be aſſured I ſhall at all times be happy, when circumſtances will permit me to afford you marks of my good will.

FREDERIC.

LETTER XXXVIII.

From M. D'Arget.

SIRE, Paris, February 6, 1756.

TWO works which are equally ſought after have appeared here, though hitherto very myſteriouſly.

myſteriouſly. The one is a poem, intitled *Le Plaiſir* *, attributed to the duc de Nivernois, which I have not read, and which it is ſaid correſponds to the delicacy of his taſte and underſtanding. Of theſe your majeſty, who is ſo good a judge, is at preſent able to make your own eſtimate.

The other is a work by M. de Voltaire; a poem, in four cantos, on natural religion, than which nothing better can be wiſhed, either for the juſtneſs of the ideas or the goodneſs of the poetry. In fine, by the confeſſion of the connoiſſeurs, it is the moſt beautiful and perfect performance that ever fell from his pen. As it is dedicated to your majeſty, and as you are more than once cited in it, in proof of the principles there eſtabliſhed, I have no doubt but that it has been ſent you by the author. The work is not printed, nor is it even poſſible to obtain a copy.

I dare not ſpeak to your majeſty on a ſubject which, at this moment, is the converſation of all Europe. From every thing which I can perceive, I am more deeply intereſted than I am able to expreſs. It is my fate to be of two countries; I am born a zealous citizen of the one, while eternal gratitude attaches me to the other; and I ſhould find infinite ſatisfaction

* Pleaſure.

could

could I form wiſhes by which they ſhould eternally be combined. An event by which they might be ſeparated I never can forget; it will ever intereſt me moſt ſenſibly. I entreat your majeſty to indulge this confeſſion of that ſincere and durable affection with which I am devoted to you.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER XXXIX.

From the King.

Potſdam, February 16, 1756.

I HAVE received your two letters, dated both on the ſame day, and containing the ſame things; except that in one you inform me of your alarms relative to the convention of London. But I am ſurpriſed that a man like you, accuſtomed to political buſineſs, ſhould believe the reaſonings of the vulgar to be facts. Be at peace; my convention will not diſturb the good intelligence which I have hitherto maintained with France; and you may very ſafely wiſh me proſperity, without betraying the intereſts of your country. I thank you however for the attachment which you continually denote for me * my poor D'Arget, and fear nothing for Europe.

LET-

LETTER XL.

From M. D'Arget.

SIRE, March 2, 1756.

IF I ever received any mark of the infinite bounty of your majeſty, it was aſſuredly in the manner in which you deigned to pardon the two letters which came to hand on the ſame day, and contained the ſame information concerning literature. The only need I have to juſtify ſuch apparent thoughtleſſneſs, which is ſo diſtant from the reſpect I have for your majeſty, is to relate the truth with that frankneſs which you love, and which I owe you.

My alarms, relative to the convention of London, were derived from more pure and important ſources than the conjectures of the public; and, as I remit this letter to Berlin in a ſafe manner, I venture to inform your majeſty, there are no efforts which the common enemies of France and of your majeſty have not made, on that occaſion, abſolutely to ſeparate intereſts which, from their nature, ought to be for ever united; nor have there been any ſeductive means which have not induſtriouſly been employed to effect this purpoſe.

Not that theſe very enemies derive their dangerous arguments from the ſubject itſelf. It is almoſt univerſally allowed that your majeſty has done what your intereſt no doubt required, for the

the preſent moment, by preſerving that tranquillity in Germany which may ſo well aid the peace of Europe, at leaſt ſo far as a continental war is concerned. Their efforts have been to embitter the minds of men relative to the form; and I repeat there is no licence in which theſe common enemies have not indulged themſelves, that they might ſpread the moſt dangerous varniſh over the myſtery which your majeſty has thought proper to obſerve, on that occaſion, toward our court.

It was when theſe troubles were at their height, penetrated by the conſequences which I ſaw the very perſons who were moſt attached to your majeſty drew, that I ventured to write to you, on the 6th of the laſt month, at my return from Verſailles. But, as I perfectly perceived it did not become me to lay ſuch conſiderations before your majeſty, I ſent the baron von Kniphauſen my two letters, differently marked, obſerving to him what I had ventured to inform your majeſty of, concerning preſent circumſtances; and that, whatever might be my riſk, by taking this liberty, my zeal obliged me to the act, while I thought it eſſential to the common intereſt that your majeſty ſhould be informed by others, as well as by the baron, of the impreſſions made on our court, at that moment. No perſon knows better than this ambaſſador how far, without betraying my country, I carry my affection for your majeſty.

I had marked the letters differently, that he might himſelf judge, having made his own reflections, which ought to be ſent, requiring the other might be burnt. It was no doubt ſome miſtake of the perſon who made up the packet, which occaſioned both of them to be ſent to your majeſty.

At preſent your majeſty is informed of the truth of an affair which muſt appear ſo ridiculous as not to be excuſed, by goodneſs leſs than yours. Permit me, ſire, to attribute this new teſtimony of your bounty to the knowledge which your majeſty has of the real feelings of my heart, according to which I requeſt the favour to be always judged by you, for they will never vary; and I entreat your majeſty to relieve me from the fears which I feel, leſt the freedom with which I acted on this occaſion ſhould have given you diſpleaſure. At preſent you are informed that it was not the conſequence of any ridiculous prejudice to my own advantage, but ſolely of my zeal and attachment to your majeſty, and to my country.

I am, &c.

LETTER XLI.

From the King.

Potſdam, March 23, 1756.

BY your letter of the ſecond of this month I perceive, with great pleaſure, the ſentiments of

of zeal and attachment which you have teſtified for me, and the eagerneſs you ſtill poſſeſs of affording me convincing proofs of their reality. The ſingular things, on which you have touched, are too nearly related to my intereſt not to thank you for the information you have thought proper to ſend. You have been guilty of no error, by remitting two letters, both of which equally gave me pleaſure. Be aſſured that my mode of thinking, relative to yourſelf, will never be capable of change.

I have enemies enough, my good D'Arget, but I fear them not * * *

be ſincere. I hope you will live in good health, and that you will preſerve your ſight. You loſe your teeth and I have no better fortune with mine. Every thing which exiſts is liable to change. You ought therefore to act reſolutely

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When we are old we muſt either determine to periſh or to ſee ourſelves die in detail. There is notwithſtanding a manner of being happy, which is to enjoy imaginary youth, to abſtract the mind from the body, and preſerve its cheerfulneſs till the farce ſhall be over, ſtrewing the laſt journey of life with flowers. This is what I wiſh you.

FREDERIC.

LETTER XLIV.

From the King.

Potſdam, September 6, 1771.

I GRANT with pleaſure the permiſſion you requeſt in your letter of the 16th of Auguſt laſt, that your ſon may preſent himſelf to me, during the reſidence which he intends to make in Pruſſia. Being acquainted with the father, I ſhall be equally happy to ſee the ſon, and you only have to addreſs him to me.

FREDERIC.

End of the Letters between FREDERIC II. *and* M. D'ARGET; *and of Volume the Twelfth.*